

## Babylonian and Biblical Acrostics(\*)

While discussion of the biblical alphabetic acrostic has increased in recent years<sup>(1)</sup>, there has been scant reference to the Babylonian name/sentence acrostics. Our ability to appreciate Babylonian name/sentence acrostics would be greater if more had survived; nonetheless, the extant corpus is quite instructive. Comparison between Babylonian and biblical acrostics will not resolve all questions about acrostic poetry, but it can be a basis for some useful generalizations and caveats about the authorship, setting, genre, purpose and aesthetic appeal of these compositions.

### I. Survey of Babylonian Acrostics

The Babylonian name/sentence acrostic poem is at least as old as the Hebrew alphabetic acrostic, probably older. Two of the seven extant Babylonian acrostics can be dated precisely, because they were written for two kings: Ashurbanipal (668-626) and Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562). On the general date and origin of the acrostic in Babylon, W. G. Lambert comments,

Even if it could be shown that the biblical examples antedate the seventh century B.C.—and it cannot—it would still seem that the Babylonian word and sentence acrostic is a native invention. Although the

(\*) This article is dedicated to Professor James L. Crenshaw in honor of his new position at Duke University, and with gratitude for his help and interest in acrostic poetry during my doctoral work.

(1) See D. N. FREEDMAN, "Acrostic Poems in the Hebrew Bible: Alphabetic and Otherwise", *CBQ* 48 (1986) 408-431; A. CERESKO, "The ABCs of Wisdom in Psalm XXXIV", *VT* 35 (1985) 99-104; A. BERLIN, "The Rhetoric of Psalm 145", *Biblical and Related Studies Presented to Samuel S. Iwry* (ed. A. KORT and S. MORSHAUER) (Winona Lake 1985) 17-22; B. JOHNSON, "Form and Message in Lamentations", *ZAW* 97 (1985) 58-73; S. BERGLER, "Threni V—Nur ein alphabetisierendes Lied? Versuch einer Deutung", *VT* 27 (1977) 304-320; G. SCHRAMM, "Poetic Patterning in Biblical Hebrew", *Michigan Oriental Studies in Honor of George Cameron* (Ann Arbor 1976) 175-178.

two dated examples were written for Ashurbanipal and Nebuchadnezzar II, nothing whatever can be deduced from this about the century the acrostic was first used<sup>(2)</sup>.

Conversely, the biblical use of the acrostic format clearly predates the Babylonian exile, as the acrostics in Nahum<sup>(3)</sup> and Psalms 9-10 demonstrate. This much can be said: acrostic poetry was written in another Semitic language in a period roughly contemporary with the writing of the biblical acrostics. Mesopotamian hymns and prayers have been helpful in illuminating Hebrew counterparts and vice versa<sup>(4)</sup>, so it is likely that comparison between the biblical and Babylonian acrostics will prove instructive.

Six of the seven extant Babylonian acrostic poems are stanzaic. In each case, the first syllable of each strophe, read vertically in sequence from the first strophe to the last, spells out a name or sentence. In all but one of the stanzaic acrostics, each line within the strophe begins with the same sign that began the strophe. This pattern, which we will term a "repeating stanzaic acrostic", is the typical pattern for the Babylonian acrostics. Two of the prayers incorporate not only an acrostic, but also a *teletic*: the terminal letters of each line, read downwards, also form a phrase.

An alphabetic acrostic would of course have been impossible in cuneiform, since that writing system never employed an alphabet but rather used a much larger complex of signs. These, however, did not adhere to a strict one-to-one correspondence between sign and

(2) W. G. LAMBERT, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford 1960) 67.

(3) Early in the century, some scholars tried to reconstruct a complete alphabetic acrostic in Nahum; see A. VAN HOONACKER, *Les douze petits Prophètes* (Paris 1908) 412-452 and G. B. GRAY, *The Forms of Hebrew Poetry* (1915; reprinted New York 1972) 243-263. More recently, scholars have acknowledged the presence of an acrostic up to *kaph*, but are not persuaded by attempts to reconstruct an acrostic beyond this point (see *BHS*). "Until the letter *kaph*, the poem is an acrostic psalm; the attempts to reconstruct the entire alphabet are ingenious but not convincing" (R. T. A. MURPHY, "Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk", *Jerome Biblical Commentary* [Englewood Cliffs 1968] 294). "Two things ought to be no longer disputed: (1) Nahum 1 does indeed begin with an acrostic hymn... (2) this hymn reproduces only half of the alphabet, ending with the letter *kaph*" (S. J. DE VRIES, "The Acrostic of Nahum in the Jerusalem Liturgy", *VT* 16 [1966] 477-478).

(4) See C. WESTERMANN, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (Atlanta 1981) 36-43; W. W. HALLO, "Individual Prayer in Sumerian: The Continuity of a Tradition", *JAOS* 88 (1968) 71-89 and the literature cited in these.

sound. One sign could represent more than one sound, and the reverse was also true: one sound could be represented by a number of signs. Most of the acrostics make use of this polyphony of sign values. As Lambert describes the so-called *Babylonian Theodicy* (# 7 below), "If a stanza has an initial *bu*, he permits words beginning with the same sign, but pronounced *pu*. The other values of the BU sign, however, *gid* and *sir*, are not used"<sup>(5)</sup>. This same *bu-pu* assonance is found in strophe 3 of the hymn to Nabû (# 1 below). A analogous assonance occurs in the hymn concerning Babylon (# 2 below) where *kir* in the acrostic has the value *ger* or *qer* in the text. An even wider range of sign values occurs in two prayers. In the prayer of Ashurbanipal (# 4 below), *aš*, *du*, and *lul* in the acrostic have the respective values of *ina*, *kub* and *nar* in the prayer itself. In another instance one of the telestics (# 5 below) contains signs that read *ú* and *liḫ* when read as part of the telestic, but have the values of *šam* and *tú* respectively in the text of the prayer. On the other hand, there is no multiplicity of signs used to represent the same sound in the acrostic; even if one of the syllables could be represented by a number of signs, the same sign was used at the beginning of each line in the strophe. Thus, the most important consideration was a conceptual or visual one: the use of the same sign.

A brief examination of each of the name/sentence acrostic texts will aid in describing the Babylonian acrostic.

1. *Hymn to Nabû* (BM 55469)<sup>(6)</sup>. This hymn consists of four strophes of ten lines each; within each strophe, the lines begin with the same syllable. The acrostic reads, *4[na]-bu-ú*, "God Nabû". The first two strophes are general praise of the god, his nature, his pre-eminence among the gods, and his beneficence to the world. The next continues to praise the god, but with specific reference to the sanctuary of Babylon and the king, thereby praising these as well. The king is mentioned in line 6 of the fourth strophe as Nebuchadnezzar; presumably Nebuchadnezzar II is meant, since the preceding line refers to "the renewal of Babylon". Since Nabû was

<sup>(5)</sup> *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, 66.

<sup>(6)</sup> Text, transliteration and translation: S. A. STRONG, "A Hymn of Nebuchadnezzar", *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* 20 (1898) 154-162; translation: M.-J. SEUX, *Hymnes et prières aux dieux de Babylonie et d'Assyrie* (Paris 1976) 124-128.

Nebuchadrezzar's eponymous patron, the hymn may have been written expressly for the king.

2. *Hymn Concerning the Restoration of Babylon* (DT 83)(7). This hymn is described by Strong as follows:

The text is a hymn of praise, composed by or for a king to celebrate the restoration of his city of Babylon and its temples, the renewals of the splendours of public worship, and the return of peace and prosperity. Unfortunately, the name of the king, with much else of interest and value, has been broken away, and there is nothing in the sonorous generalities that remain to point to one king more than any other who, in the course of its long history, restored or may have restored, Babylon. However, the fact that the tablet was brought, not from Babylonia but from Assyria, might lead us to identify the king either with Esarhaddon or with Ashurbanipal(8).

Not enough of the text survives to determine whether its principal intent is to honor the city itself(9), the god Marduk (1. 6, obverse; 1. 1 reverse) or the king responsible for the restoration (which, in view of 11. 3-13, reverse, seems the most likely). The strophes are five lines long; within each strophe the lines begin with the same sign and sound. All that remains of the acrostic are the syllables ...-na ar-ba... zi-kir-šu: "... four [?]... his name". The sentence may have expressed a wish that the glory of the king (or the god, or the city) extend to the four corners of the world (which are mentioned in line 11, reverse).

3. *Fragment of an Acrostic Prayer* (K 14022)(10). This fragment is indeed very small, but enough survives to indicate that it follows a stanzaic format similar to the previous two acrostics: stanzas created by beginning successive lines with the same sign.

4. *Prayer of Ashurbanipal to Marduk* (K 7592 + K 8717 + DT 363)(11). Lambert and Seux both call this a hymn, but Babylonian

(7) Text: Th. PINCHES, *Texts in the Babylonian Wedge-Writing* (London 1882) 15f; text, transliteration and translation: S. A. STRONG, "On Some Babylonian and Assyrian Alliterative Texts", *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* 17 (1895) 131-137; translation: SEUX, *Hymnes*, 122-124.

(8) STRONG, "Alliterative Texts", 131. Seux thinks the king in question might be Sargon (*Hymnes*, 124).

(9) Seux calls it a hymn "à Babylone" (*Hymnes*, 122).

(10) Text: H. ZIMMERN, "Weiteres zur babylonischen Metrik", *ZA* 10 (1895) 20.

(11) Text: J. A. CRAIG, *Assyrian and Babylonian Religious Texts I* (Leipzig 1895) 29-31; transliteration and translation: P. JENSEN, *Texte zur assyrisch-*



prayers are often preceded by long sections of praise, and while much of the text consists of praise of Marduk, the conclusion is a petition. That the text is ultimately found to be a prayer is confirmed by the acrostic sentence: *a-na-ku aš-[šu]r-[ba-an]-ap-li šá il-su-ka [b]u-[u]l-[l]i-[t]a-[nī]-[m]a ma-[r]u-du-uk da-li-li-ka lu-ud-lul<sup>(12)</sup>*, "I am Ashurbanipal who pray to thee; grant me life, O Marduk, and I will sing thy praise". Lambert describes the strophes as "elevated prose"<sup>(13)</sup>. Each strophe consists of two to three lines, but only the first syllable of each strophe conforms to the acrostic scheme; thus this is the only extant Babylonian "non-repeating stanzaic acrostic" (cf. Lamentations 1, 2, and 4; Psalm 37).

5. *A Pair of Acrostic/Telestic Prayers* (Khorsabad 1932, 26)<sup>(14)</sup>. Each side of this tablet contains a prayer on behalf of one Nabû-ušebši (line 9, obverse; line 8, reverse). These are the only Babylonian acrostics that have been found which do not employ stanzas. Each prayer employs a *telestic* (i.e., the terminal letters form a phrase) as well as an acrostic. Both acrostics identify the author of the poem with the one on whose behalf the prayer is offered: *šá Na-bu-ú-ú-[še]-[eb<sup>1</sup>]/šeb-ši a-ši-pi* "(composition) of Nabû-ušebši, the exorcist". The telestics proclaim his subservience to Marduk and Nabû respectively, identifying Nabû-ušebši as *re-e-šu mu-šá-pu-ú bé-lu-ti-ka*, "the servant who proclaims your supremacy [Marduk]", and *re-e-š[u] [m]u[t]-né-nu-u pa-liḫ-ka*, "the servant given to prayer who worships you [Nabû]"<sup>(15)</sup>.

Lambert regards these two prayers as private prayers, and comments,

They are quite different from the many short incantation prayers which served for private persons, and they have a range of vocabulary

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*babylonischen Religion* (Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek 6/2; Berlin 1915) 108-117; translation: W. VON SODEN in A. FALKENSTEIN and W. VON SODEN, *Sumerische und akkadische Hymnen und Gebete* (Zürich-Stuttgart 1953) 249-253; SEUX, *Hymnes*, 115-121.

<sup>(12)</sup> Transliteration provided by Prof. W. Mayer (Rome) based on his private collation.

<sup>(13)</sup> *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, 67.

<sup>(14)</sup> Text, transliteration and translation: W. G. LAMBERT, "Literary Style in First Millenium Mesopotamia", *JAOS* 88 (1968) 130-132; acrostic translated in R. SWEET, "A Pair of Double Acrostics in Akkadian", *Or* n.s. 38 (1969) 459-460.

<sup>(15)</sup> SWEET, "A Pair of Double Acrostics", 459.

not normally expended on a personal item. . . . As to date, the ranking together of Marduk and Nabû strongly supports a first millenium date, and with this the stylistic sophistication agrees. This consists in substituting learned words for their ordinary equivalents<sup>(16)</sup>.

Had Lambert recognized the acrostic format in these prayers, he might have cited the necessity to conform to the acrostic scheme as one of the reasons for the poem's sophisticated vocabulary.

6. *An Acrostic/Telestic Prayer to Nabû* (K 8204)<sup>(17)</sup>. The prayer is written in nine strophes of four lines each. Only three of the stanzas have come down to us intact, but enough of the text has survived to enable the acrostic to be read thus: -ú-šá- al-du-du ma-ru-uš-tu, which might be understood as "... that I found myself in distress"<sup>(18)</sup>. This poem is also a telestic, except in this case it is the same sentence as the acrostic. Since this is a repeating stanzaic acrostic as well as a telestic and since, moreover, the terminal signs do consistently stand for the same sound, we have, in effect, rhymed stanzas (AAAA, BBBB, etc.).

7. *The Babylonian Theodicy*<sup>(19)</sup>. This poem is perhaps the best known Babylonian acrostic. It consists of 27 strophes of eleven lines each. Within each stanza, each line begins with the same syllable, with some poetic license as described above. Despite this, and a few other places where the language seems forced, the achievement is impressive. At 297 lines of poetry, it is the longest acrostic from the ancient Near East. The 11-line stanza is unique in Babylonian poetry; the stanza is organized into five couplets and one odd line. The odd line, as Lambert points out, is reserved usually for a point of special emphasis, and often comes at the end of the stanza. The poem is a dialogue between a sufferer, who complains of his treatment at the hands of the gods and humanity, and a friend, who offers pious and reasoned rebukes in a courteous fashion. But in the last two stanzas, the two move closer together. The friend concedes that the gods responsible for creating humanity gave them "perverse speech" so that they flatter the rich and oppress the poor. The suf-

(16) LAMBERT, "Literary Style", 130.

(17) Text, transliteration and translation: STRONG, "Alliterative Texts", 137-141.

(18) W. Mayer, private communication.

(19) Transliteration and translation: LAMBERT, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, 63-91; text: *ibid.*, pl. 19-26.

ferer then continues his lament, but ends with a prayer and a confession of trust (in Shamash) neither of which was found previously in his speeches. The acrostic reads: *a-na-ku sa-ag-gi-il-ki-[i-na-am-u]b-bi-ib ma-áš-ma-šu ka-ri-bu ša i-li ú šar-ri*, "I, Saggil-kīnam-ubbib, the incantation priest, am adorant of the god and the king".

## II. Genre, Authorship and Setting

The preceding survey has revealed the same basic distribution of genres in the few extant Babylonian acrostics as may be found in the biblical ones: hymn (e.g. Psalm 145), prayer (e.g. Psalm 25) and wisdom poem (e.g. Proverbs 31,10-31). The connection with ritual and worship appears to be quite strong in the Babylonian acrostics. With the exception of the "Theodicy", all the acrostic texts are hymns or prayers.

This needs to be stated because there is a tendency to subsume biblical acrostic poetry under the rubric of "wisdom literature". Thus, C. Stuhlmueller's popular commentary on the psalms advises students to regard acrostic style as a rhetorical feature indicating the presence of wisdom literature<sup>(20)</sup>. When confronted with a prayer such as Psalm 25, he is not sure whether to classify it as an individual lament or with the sapiential literature<sup>(21)</sup>. A. Ceresko connects the acrostic with "a characteristic concern of the wisdom writers: that effort to wrest some kind of order and coherence out of the variety and seeming disconnectedness of the experiences of everyday life and to express that order in language, especially language in its written form"<sup>(22)</sup>. That the composers of acrostics were concerned with order seems to me undeniable; whether we should attribute the manifestations of this concern in acrostic poetry to "Israelite wisdom schools"<sup>(23)</sup> is more debatable.

The authorship of the Babylonian acrostic poems can of course be attributed, broadly speaking, to scribes, persons with proficiency

<sup>(20)</sup> *Psalms 1* (Wilmington 1983) 42.

<sup>(21)</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>(22)</sup> "ABCs of Wisdom", 102.

<sup>(23)</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

in the complex art of Babylonian wedge writing. It may be safely assumed that these poems were written compositions from the first, since the primary demand of the acrostic form is to begin each stanza or line with a particular *sign*; the sound, though clearly a factor, is of secondary importance. The Hebrew alphabetic acrostic likewise depends on the art of writing; hence, its authorship too may be assumed to be scribal. The only difference is the greater simplicity of the alphabetic system, which may have increased the pool of potential authors for the Hebrew acrostics (although this is by no means certain).

But once we have said this, have we limited the field of potential authors beyond what we would normally expect from an established cultus at this period? Most Babylonians and Jews at this time could not write, but most Babylonians and Jews did not compose formal hymns and prayers for public occasions either; those who did could presumably write as well. The term "scribes" applied to the authors of these poems is accurate if it conjures in our minds an image of persons who can write and who have knowledge of texts which the ordinary person does not possess, but misleading if we make this their sole or even primary function. The author of the *Theodicy* (which of all the acrostics, Babylonian or Hebrew, most deserves the appellation "wisdom literature") describes himself in the acrostic not as a scribe but as an "incantation priest". The acrostic sentence as a whole is similar in both form and content to those employed in the prayer of Ashurbanipal to Marduk and the paired acrostic/telestic prayers to Marduk and Nabû. While the *Theodicy* as a whole is undeniably wisdom literature, the text of its acrostic seems to borrow something from the realm of prayer, in order to anchor the poem in a sense of the author's fundamental religious and social loyalty (see III below). In conclusion, the presence of an acrostic should not predispose us to expect a "wisdom psalm"<sup>(24)</sup>.

One frequently hears of biblical acrostics being treated as mixed

(24) J. L. Crenshaw prefers to restrict the category "wisdom psalms" to "discussion literature" and avoids "certain formal and thematic considerations: . . . acrostic (alphabetic) arrangement; . . . mere didactic intent; themes such as 'fear of God', the fate of the righteous and the wicked; and exhortation as such" (*Old Testament Wisdom* [Atlanta 1981] 185).

genres<sup>(25)</sup>, but in the case of the Babylonian acrostics, one does not get the impression that the introduction of the acrostic schema has destroyed the internal logic of the genre in which the poem was written. Thus, if any of the Hebrew acrostics are "mixed up" it is not a result of the alleged difficulty of writing an alphabetic acrostic. The Babylonian acrostics would appear to be more demanding than their Hebrew counterparts both because of the greater specificity of syllabic signs, and because of the employment of stanzas of four to eleven lines in which each line begins with the same sign. The only biblical acrostics to employ the repeating stanzaic format are Lamentations 3 (three-line stanzas) and Psalm 119 (eight-line stanzas).

Before judgment is rendered on whether or not the biblical poems are "mixed genres", we should recognize the potential semantic confusion in the commonplace terms "acrostic form" and "form criticism". These are two very different uses of the word "form". When one speaks of the "forms" which "form criticism" seeks to uncover, one generally considers such things as the purpose of the work and the structure of the contents. When one speaks of the acrostic "form", all that is meant is adherence to a particular word pattern which regulates the use of particular letters and sounds. Sonnet, hexameter and alliterative poetry are other instances of word patterning. Theoretically, one could write an acrostic or, say, a sonnet, about anything. The form itself requires only adherence to the pattern, whatever it may be. Such adherence does not, of course, guarantee that the poem will be a good poem, but it does guarantee that the poem will be, for example, an acrostic or a sonnet. The range of tone and subject matter that has been filtered through the

(25) See, for example, Mowinckel's comment on the "learned psalmography": "[I]t tries to keep to the old paths and adhere to the old rules of composition, but without any real comprehension. As people no longer composed for a definite cultic occasion, the preservation of the specific types of composition was no longer safeguarded by their "place in life", as it used to be, and the different modes and motives became mixed. We may therefore speak of a disintegration of style. This is particularly marked in that type of composition which in later Jewish opinion was reckoned amongst the most skillful, namely alphabetic psalms. . . here, sometimes, elements of style from nearly all the ancient species of poetry are mixed up, according as the initial letter has called up by association one or other characteristic catchword" (*The Psalms in Israel's Worship* [Nashville 1962] II, 111-112).

acrostic form is too extensive to be classified under a single "form-critical" category.

Because it is not tied to a "setting in life", the acrostic form is often dismissed as "artificial". But this is to treat the acrostic as if it were claiming to be another form-critical genre. Once we have ceased dismissing the acrostic due to its "artificiality", we can entertain the possibility that there can exist in acrostic poetry a creative interaction of the acrostic form with traditional genres that leaves the integrity of the latter intact. As Rolf Knierim observes,

It is well recognized that traces of typical patterns appear in texts. But we need not discuss the presence of such genre elements here, since they do not govern a text in its entirety. We must, however, pay attention to a less recognized fact: the entirety of a text may be governed by more than one typical structure. A psalm can follow a rhetorical pattern (acrostic, strophe, verse) and at the same time the typical structure of a traditional theme, or a liturgical event. The question is, therefore, how these structural types interact<sup>(26)</sup>.

The Babylonian acrostics display an interaction between the acrostic form and traditional genres that is cooperative and creative. We should expect the same thing in their Hebrew counterparts, and not mere destruction and disintegration of traditional genres.

This leads to the question of the setting of the acrostic poems. Here it is not possible to say that the presence of the acrostic form dictates a single answer. Some of the biblical acrostic poems (e.g. Psalms 9-10 and Nahum 1,2-8) have been plausibly assigned to the liturgy of the Jerusalem cultus. A cultic use is also conceivable for the two Babylonian acrostic hymns<sup>(27)</sup>. The Babylonian acrostic prayers seem to be more private in nature, and it is possible that some of the biblical acrostics (e.g. Psalm 119) would also have a more private setting.

Two of the Babylonian acrostics mention the office of king; two others go even further by naming a specific king for whom the prayer or hymn was written. There is, of course, no counterpart to this specific designation of a particular king in any Hebrew liturgical poetry, where the only kings mentioned by name are those of the dynastic founders, David and Solomon. Moreover, none of the bi-

<sup>(26)</sup> "Old Testament Form Criticism Reconsidered", *Int* 27 (1963) 462.

<sup>(27)</sup> Seux cites the mention of musical accompaniment in these hymns as possibly indicating a liturgical role (*Hymnes*, 16-17).

blical acrostics make specific mention of the office of king. This difference should, however, be treated with caution in the light of the assertion, made by J. Eaton and others, that the role of the king has traditionally been underestimated in the study of the psalms. Eaton treats the acrostic composition Psalms 9-10 as a psalm with "clearly royal content"<sup>(28)</sup>. He also cites "possible royal elements" in Psalm 119, but believes that its "peculiar development of praise for God's word or law" disqualifies it from treatment as a royal psalm. He states that the didactic features of Psalms 25 and 37 make them "difficult to place", and that "Little can be said of the speaker in... 145 (*ḥdawid*)... except that a festal setting is... probable"<sup>(29)</sup>.

### III. The Aesthetics of Acrostic Poetry

Artists throughout history have sought to express themselves in interaction with some kind of abstract, unchanging pattern. One sees this process at work from the dactylic hexameters of Homer to the twelve-tone serial technique of Arnold Schoenberg. We cannot discuss here just how important this is to the essence of art, nor shall we attempt to evaluate the acrostic poems relative to other attempts of this kind in poetry and the arts. It is sufficient to note that the acrostics belong with such attempts, and can best be understood if we begin with this general conception of their *raison d'être*.

In the case of acrostic poetry, employment of this "abstract, unchanging pattern" coincides with what may be called, following Mowinckel, the "enumerative character" of biblical poetry as a whole, which proceeds by juxtaposition rather than by logical argument<sup>(30)</sup>. Divine epithets, lament motives, petitions—in short, the stuff of religious poetry—can be piled on indefinitely. The acrostic form provides structure, stimulus, and limit for this "enumeration". Similarly, Lambert describes Mesopotamian poetry in the first millennium (to which most, if not all, of the Babylonian acrostics be-

<sup>(28)</sup> J. EATON, *Kingship and the Psalms* (Sheffield 1986) 32-33.

<sup>(29)</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>(30)</sup> *Psalms in Israel's Worship*, II, 169.

long) as employing a "traditional style" which could be, at its best, "immensely varied" and, at its worst, "a stock of hackneyed phrases and clichés"<sup>(31)</sup>. The acrostic is heir to both this best and worst; it might provide both order and stimulus to the variety, or it might merely serve as a more attractive way of arranging the hackneyed phrases and clichés. Acrostic poetry neither soars above nor sinks beneath the general level of creativity present in its culture. But it does attest to a desire for a more ordered poetics in what had become a rather diffuse poetic art.

In the case of the Babylonian acrostics, the poet started with the name or sentence that would form the acrostic, which always has some relation to the contents of the poem. There is therefore an element of conscious choice in the determination of which of many "abstract, unchanging patterns" the poet is going to use. The acrostic identifies the poem's author, the purpose of the composition, the one to whom it is addressed, or some combination of these<sup>(32)</sup>. The acrostic therefore reinforces the content of the poem.

There is even the potential in the name/sentence acrostic for an interaction between the acrostic text and the main text, a possibility exploited in *The Babylonian Theodicy*. While the text of the poem is largely a complaint, the acrostic which gives the poem its structure is an assertion of the author's goodwill towards social order in the divine and human spheres. One could say that the acrostic text which proclaimed his loyalty gave him greater freedom (both inwardly and in the eyes of others) to voice his complaints and doubts. The acrostic thus constitutes the framework in which the problem of innocent suffering is explored. The acrostic gives the

<sup>(31)</sup> "Literary Style", 124.

<sup>(32)</sup> Similar use of the name/sentence acrostic can be found in later Greek and Roman literature. A few examples will suffice here. A didactic poem of the geographer Dionysius Peregetes contains the acrostics *emē dionousiou ton entos pharou* and *theos hermēs epi adrianou*. In Greek inscriptions, the acrostic is sometimes the name of the author, or the name of the deceased in grave inscriptions, or a repetition of the first word of a poem (perhaps as a title). Cicero informs us that in some of the works of the poet Ennius the initial words of each line form the words *Quintus Ennius Fecit* (*De Divinatione* II iii). Attached to the comedies of Plautus are summaries of the play in acrostic verse form, presumably by a later hand; the acrostic spells out the name of the play. These and additional examples are discussed in E. GRAF, "Akrostichis", *PW* I, 1200-1207.



poet scope for sustained reflection, and allows him to explore the questions of theodicy without having to resolve them or abandon his social and religious loyalties.

Although the poet began with the acrostic text as a matrix for the work, habit causes the reader to begin reading horizontally rather than vertically. Thus the impression of the finished product is the reverse of the process of composition: the poem gives the appearance of generating the acrostic, as if revealing a secret about itself<sup>(33)</sup>.

The alphabetic framework is, by contrast, abstract; it does not say anything. Rather, it says everything, for the twenty-two letters of the alphabet "embrace all possibilities of words"<sup>(34)</sup>. The alphabet is a ready metaphor for totality. Certain Jewish traditions speak of the law as having been kept or transgressed from Aleph to Tau (*Sanh.* 54a), the New Testament book of Revelation refers to Christ as "the Alpha and the Omega" (1,8,11; 21,6; 22,13), and one may still hear the phrase "everything from A to Z".

N. Gottwald proposed the idea of "completeness" as a rationale for the acrostic form in his work on Lamentations<sup>(35)</sup>. This rationale is helpful, but it needs to be understood in conjunction with what has already been said about the acrostic's relation to the enumerative tendencies in Hebrew poetry. It is easy to see where the acrostic device is used to convey completeness in acrostic poems that function as encomia, such as Psalm 112 or Proverbs 31,10-31; the righteous man and the capable woman possess all the necessary desirable qualities "from Aleph to Tau". But it may be more difficult to see how the idea of completeness functions in a prayer, until we reflect that it is possible to multiply prayer formulae indefinitely. Symbolically, by taking the prayer through the alphabet, a sense of completeness is evoked without having to be comprehensive.

It may be this sense of "completeness" that partially accounts

<sup>(33)</sup> The Christian acrostic in the Sybylline Oracles 8,217-50 takes advantage of this "revelatory" quality. The poem itself does not mention Christ by name, but describes the end of the age and one who is to come, hinting that a specific identification is foretold *en akrostichiois theosemois*. The acrostic reads *iêsous chreistos theou uios sôtêr stauros*.

<sup>(34)</sup> A. JEREMIAS, *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des Alten Orients* (Leipzig 1930) 665.

<sup>(35)</sup> *Studies in the Book of Lamentations* (SBT 14; Chicago 1954) 28-32.

for the "reflective" tendency of some of the later acrostics. If one is conscious of approaching one's theme from all possible vantage points, one may tend to be more reflective about it. In addition, where a greater degree of didacticism occurs in cultic poetry, the needs and the tenor of the community may be primarily responsible.

The alphabet was not only a metaphor that embraced totality with wondrous economy, it was a fixed sequence that did not have to be justified, but was simply there, ready to be built on. In most languages, this fixed sequence appears completely arbitrary, but in the Northwest Semitic languages, among which the alphabet originated, the alphabet has a greater appearance of logical order. As G. R. Driver describes it, the dominant organizing principle is phonetic, although similarities having to do with the sign's name also play a part<sup>(36)</sup>. Moreover, unlike the later versions of the alphabet (where the names of the letters signify only the letters), most of the names of the letters of the Semitic alphabet are also words. To recite it is not to recite mere sounds, but a catalogue of common objects, animals and parts of the body. Some of these may not have been recognized as words by the time the acrostics came to be written, but surely many were. Thus it was easier and more appropriate to see the alphabet as a matrix of living speech.

In conclusion, the name/sentence acrostic and the alphabetic acrostic each enjoy peculiar advantages from an aesthetic standpoint. The name/sentence acrostic has the advantage of having its structure individually tailored to the contents of the poem. The alphabetic acrostic has the advantage of producing a diverse series of compositions sprung from the same seemingly inexhaustible matrix.

#### IV. Signalling the Acrostic

The acrostic is a kind of "concealed art" that is not apparent when the poem is simply read out loud<sup>(37)</sup>. Its discovery depends

<sup>(36)</sup> *Semitic Writing* (rev. ed., London 1976) 179-185. Recently, W. C. Watt has argued that the order of the alphabet is determined exclusively by a phonetic matrix ("The Byblos Matrix", *JNES* 46 [1987] 1-14).

<sup>(37)</sup> Babylonian acrostics, as we have already observed, employ a polyphony of sign values that clearly demonstrate that acrostic patterning is more

on reading the poem in a different direction than one normally reads. Yet it is hidden in order to be revealed, so there has to be some way of indicating to the reader that an acrostic pattern is at work. Otherwise, why should the reader attempt to read downwards?

The most common signalling device in Babylonian poetry is to repeat the acrostic sign at the beginning of each line of a stanza of anywhere from four to eleven lines. The perception that each line in a stanza begins with the same sign is immediately striking, and alerts the reader to look for the comprehensive acrostic pattern that unites the stanzas. The effectiveness of this device is confirmed by the fact that scholars immediately infer that K 14022 is an acrostic from the fact that its few surviving lines all begin with the same sign.

That there is a need for such a signal is clear from the two acrostics that do not use the normal repeating stanzaic format. In the Prayer of Ashurbanipal to Marduk, the acrostic is signalled by the unusual layout of each stanza in the form of a "hanging" paragraph: all lines indented except the first. For the paired acrostic/telestic prayers (Khorsabad 1932, 26), "[t]he ancient author has obligingly indicated that... 'the beginning of each line and the end of each line may be read two ways'"<sup>(38)</sup>. This is the only known acrostic with an inscription identifying it as an acrostic, but it is the only one where it is necessary, since other acrostic poems call attention to their format in other ways.

The difficulty of signalling the name/sentence acrostic may account, at least partially, for the fact that biblical poetry avoids it in favor of the alphabetic acrostic<sup>(39)</sup>. The absence of vowels in the Hebrew script would have created greater ambiguity in attempting to decipher a name/sentence acrostic. Whether in its own day the

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for the eye than for the ear. It might be possible to discern an alphabetic acrostic simply on the basis of hearing, but its presence is ascertained much more quickly when the poem is seen. Moreover, the conceptual appeal of the acrostic discussed above also argues against the view that the acrostic was designed to appeal primarily to the ear.

<sup>(38)</sup> SWEET, "A Pair of Double Acrostics", 459.

<sup>(39)</sup> Bergler's attempt ("Threni V") to argue that Lamentations 5 is not a 22-line "alphabetisierendes Lied" but a sentence acrostic is not convincing; it relies on textual emendation, and in any case the "coincidence" of its 22 line count with the alphabet remains.

liturgical poetry of the Bible was provided with the kind of explicit rubrics we encounter in the cuneiform tablets cannot be said; however, no such rubrics appear in the present biblical manuscripts. Similarly, there is no parallel in biblical manuscripts or Hebrew inscriptions to the innovative layout of Ashurbanipal's prayer to Marduk.

Thus the only remaining way of signalling the name/sentence acrostic is the repeating stanzaic format. This was not only possible in Hebrew poetics, but was employed in two alphabetic acrostics: Lamentations 3 and Psalm 119. However, both these poems are conspicuous in the Biblical canon for their length and monumental quality; on the whole, the religious poetry of Israel and Judah was shorter, more concise, than that of the Babylonians. Since the repeating stanzaic name/sentence acrostic virtually dictates a long poem, this may be a reason for its scarcity in biblical poetry. Or perhaps repeating stanzaic acrostics generally made too heavy demands on a more limited Hebrew vocabulary. In any case, the alphabetic order of the letters is an instantly recognizable pattern that does not require any additional signalling through rubrics, graphics or repetition of the acrostic letters<sup>(40)</sup>.

## V. A Mnemonic Purpose for the Biblical Acrostics?

A reason frequently cited for writing an alphabetic acrostic is that it functions as an aid to memory. This view goes back at least as far as Lowth<sup>(41)</sup>, and is frequently encountered in commentaries and treatments of Hebrew poetry<sup>(42)</sup>. It is, on the surface, a plausible view, but it is vulnerable to a number of criticisms. In the first place, it is difficult to maintain in the light of the parallel Babylonian acrostics, which no one supposes were written with a mnemonic

<sup>(40)</sup> The lack of an adequate "signal" is one of the things that makes me skeptical about the partial, line-internal acrostics P. Auffret claims to have found in Psalm 61 ("Essai sur la structure littéraire du Psaume 61", *JANESCU* 14 (1982) 2-3.

<sup>(41)</sup> *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (Andover 1829) I, 57.

<sup>(42)</sup> E.g., M. DAHOOD, *Psalms 1-50* (AB16; Garden City 1965) 54; BERGLER, "Threni V", 309-310.

end in view<sup>(43)</sup>. The mnemonic hypothesis is still with us in the biblical field, however, partly because the Babylonian acrostics have not been adequately considered by commentators on biblical acrostics, and partly because the aesthetic motivations of the composers of acrostics have not been fully appreciated.

Another problem with this hypothesis is that it ignores the literary (which is not to say non-cultic) nature of the texts involved. Memory preserves the *oral* tradition, but in the case of the acrostic a mnemonic *raison d'être* is being invoked for poetry which obviously began as written poetry, since knowledge of the alphabet presumes a knowledge of writing. For the same reason, the alphabetic schema would only serve as an aid to memory for those who knew how to write, and these persons would already have the advantage of being able to refer to a written text should their memory fail.

Further, we must distinguish between the observation that a poem has certain features which might make it memorable once it is written and the assertion that the purpose of these features is mnemonic. Once a poem employs any form of word patterning, subsequent attempts to memorize it may rely on the pattern, but such reliance does not mean that the author employed the pattern for a mnemonic purpose. A person trying to repeat Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18" from memory and mentally casting about for the third line will probably consider that the line has to rhyme with "summer's day". It would however, be ludicrous to assert that Shakespeare employed the sonnet form for a mnemonic purpose. One cannot even say that rhymed (or acrostic) poetry is always easier to memorize than blank verse, since ease of memory also depends on the poem's vocabulary, its length, and the strength of the impression it makes on the mind.

The length of some of the acrostic poems presents another difficulty. When a mnemonic is being written, the writer usually has some idea of what he wants to convey and not only gives it a memorable structure, but condenses the material as much as possible. Extreme examples of this are the Hebrew mnemonic acronyms

<sup>(43)</sup> Franz Dornseiff realized this when he wrote, "Dass der mnemonische Gesichtspunkt nicht massgebend war, geht daraus hervor, dass der alphabetischen Akrostichis die Namenakrostichis vorangegangen ist" (*Das Alphabet in Mystik und Magie* [Leipzig 1922] 146).

which use only the initial letters of words, such as *bʿgadkʿpat*, *tanak*, *dʿšak* 'ʿdaš *bʿahab* (the ten plagues). But only Psalms 111 and 112 appear to be "condensed" poetry, while the other acrostics (particularly Lamentations 1-4 and Psalm 119) are not only long, but give the impression of trying to extend a limited amount of subject matter as far as it will go.

Lamentations 3 and Psalm 119 are particularly difficult to imagine as having been written with ease of memory in view. As has already been observed, the Hebrew poetic line is a relatively self-contained thing, whether it appears as an acrostic or not. When such lines are introduced into stanzas three or eight lines long, and each of the lines begins with the same letter, how does one know which line in a stanza comes when? Certainly not by appeal of the acrostic framework. In fact, the similarity of the opening words of each line might in itself serve as an impediment to memory rather than an aid. That there is no such confusion in the versions of Psalm 119 is due to its *textual* tradition, and perhaps also to a certain logic of thought sequence often denied the psalm.

## VI. Conclusion

The following conclusions may be drawn from our study: a) acrostics are not a sign of wisdom literature; b) acrostics are used in a variety of genres, most frequently those having to do with ritual and worship (i.e., hymns and prayers); c) acrostics were written primarily for aesthetic reasons that relate to the "enumerative" character of Semitic poetry (although the aesthetics of an alphabetic poem differ somewhat from a name/sentence acrostic); d) an acrostic either signals its presence or requires an external signal; e) alphabetic acrostic poems were not mnemonics<sup>(44)</sup>.

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## SOMMAIRE

La présente étude développe les points suivants: a) l'acrostiche n'est pas un signe impératif de littérature sapientielle; b) l'acrostiche est utilisé en des genres différents très souvent en rapport avec les rites et le culte; c) l'acrostiche fut d'abord utilisé pour des raisons esthétiques: il souligne le caractère "énumératif" de la poésie sémitique; d) l'acrostiche est repérable formellement; e) les poésies en acrostiche alphabétique ne sont pas mnémoniques.

## Gn 22,1-19. Essai sur les niveaux de lecture

Au cours des dernières années, Gn 22 a fait l'objet de plusieurs études littéraires de grand intérêt. En 1975, R. Lack avait étudié la structure du chapitre<sup>(1)</sup>. Dans la même ligne J. I. Lawlor a examiné le style du passage et déterminé sa fonction dans le cycle d'Abraham<sup>(2)</sup>. Plus récemment, Y. Mazor a relevé trois techniques narratives importantes de Gn 22, la différence de niveau de connaissance qui s'établit d'emblée entre le lecteur et Abraham (ce dernier ne sachant pas que Dieu le met à l'épreuve, cf. Gn 22,1), les liens entre Gn 22,2 et 12,1 et la façon de décrire le caractère d'Abraham<sup>(3)</sup>.

Du point de vue de l'interprétation de l'ensemble, deux essais sont à retenir, ceux de S. E. McEvenue et de M. Sternberg<sup>(4)</sup>. Mais ils mettent l'accent sur des aspects assez différents. Pour le premier, le véritable point focal du récit est la participation active du lecteur au drame du patriarche alors que, pour le second, ce qui importe n'est pas la reconstruction des sentiments d'Abraham mais son obéissance finale<sup>(5)</sup>.

(1) R. LACK, «Le sacrifice d'Isaac. Analyse structurale de la couche élohiste dans Gn 22», *Bib* 56 (1975) 1-12.

(2) J. I. LAWLOR, «The Test of Abraham. Gen 22:1-19», *Grace Theological Journal* 1 (1980) 19-35.

(3) Y. MAZOR, «Genesis 22: The Ideological Rhetoric and the Psychological Composition», *Bib* 67 (1986) 81-88.

(4) S. E. MCEVENUE, «The Elohist at Work», *ZAW* 96 (1984) 315-332; sur Gn 22: 323-325; M. STERNBERG, *The Poetics of Biblical Narratives. Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Indiana Literary Biblical Series; Bloomington 1985) 192 et *passim*.

(5) MCEVENUE, «The Elohist at Work», 325, parle de «participant focus»; il dit entre autres: «...if the reader does not participate, if he maintains aesthetic distance, then he must reject the story out of hand as presenting God in an intolerable light». STERNBERG, *Poetics*, 192, dit au contraire: «...the focus of interest lies in Abraham's supreme obedience regardless of any possible thought». Dans le même sens que ce dernier, cf. T. L. THOMPSON, *The Origin Tradition of Ancient Israel. I. The Literary formation of Genesis and Exodus 1-23* (JSOTS 55; Sheffield 1987) 97-99.



Notre propos sera, à partir des données fournies par les auteurs cités précédemment, d'essayer de découvrir un fil conducteur dans le récit qui permette de retracer à la fois l'itinéraire du lecteur (avec S. E. McEvenue) et celui d'Abraham (avec M. Sternberg). Pour ce faire, il paraît opportun de se demander d'abord quels sont les principes qui ont présidé au choix des différentes scènes (I-II) pour voir ensuite comment ils ont été appliqués (III).

## I. Les différentes scènes de Gn 22

Après l'introduction (v. 1a), la narration comporte six moments ou «scènes» et un épilogue: (1) l'ordre de Dieu (vv. 1b-2), (2) les préparatifs du départ, le matin (v. 3), (3) la séparation d'avec les serviteurs en vue de la montagne, le troisième jour (vv. 4-6), (4) la conversation durant l'ascension (vv. 7-8), (5) le sacrifice jusqu'au moment où la voix de l'ange arrête Abraham (vv. 9-10), (6) le dénouement du récit (vv. 11-14.15-18) et la scène du retour (épilogue, v. 19). Les critères de division sont les indications de temps, de lieu et les changements de personnages<sup>(6)</sup>. Une inclusion encadre la quatrième scène («ils marchèrent tous deux ensemble», vv. 6b.8b).

La plupart des scènes de Gn 22 sont séparées soit par des «blancs» ou des «résumés», c'est-à-dire des moments où le «temps raconté» est proportionnellement beaucoup plus important que le «temps racontant»<sup>(7)</sup>. Ainsi rien n'est dit de ce qu'Abraham fit entre

<sup>(6)</sup> Ces six moments forment six scènes définies, selon les critères habituels du théâtre, par l'unité de lieu, d'action, de temps (absence d'interruptions importantes) et le fait qu'elles comportent le même groupe de personnages. L'entrée ou la sortie d'un personnage signale le passage d'une scène à l'autre. Mais la narration peut être plus souple que le théâtre, surtout en ce qui concerne l'unité de lieu ou de temps. Cf. S. BARNET-M. BERMAN-W. BURTO, *A Dictionary of Literary, Dramatic and Cinematic Terms* (Boston 1971) 11; M. H. ABRAMS (ed.), *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (New York 1981) 2.

<sup>(7)</sup> Cette distinction vient du critique allemand G. MÜLLER, «Erzählzeit und erzählte Zeit», *Morphologische Poetik* (Tübingen 1968); cf. E. LÄMMERT, *Bauformen des Erzählens* (Stuttgart 1975) 23 et *passim*; G. GENETTE, *Figures III* (Paris 1972) 122-144; S. CHATMAN, *Story and Discourse. Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca-London 1978) 62-63, 67-78. Le «temps raconté» est la durée des événements racontés. Le «temps racontant» est le temps matériel nécessaire à l'acte de raconter. Un narrateur peut résumer en

l'ordre de Dieu et les préparatifs du matin («ellipse») ou durant les trois jours de voyage. De toute la marche d'approche du lieu du sacrifice, le narrateur ne rapporte qu'une brève conversation. La sixième scène (vv. 11-14.15-18) ne répond pas à ce critère. Mais l'entrée d'un nouveau personnage, l'ange de YHWH, oblige à la séparer de ce qui précède. L'épilogue se distingue par un changement de personnage (disparition de l'ange de YHWH) et de lieu (voyage du retour jusqu'à Béerschéva)<sup>(8)</sup>.

Ces quelques scènes contiennent surtout des indications de lieu. La formule qui décrit l'endroit du sacrifice retourne à plusieurs reprises comme un refrain (vv. 3.9; cf. vv. 2.4.5.14). En fait, le rythme de la narration ralentit chaque fois que le «lieu» prend de l'importance et requiert une décision. C'est le cas lorsque Dieu donne son ordre (vv. 1a-2), lors du départ (v. 3), au moment où le «lieu» est en vue (vv. 4-6). Quand Isaac interroge son père, ce dernier doit, au moins de façon voilée, préciser son intention (vv. 7-8). Enfin, sur le lieu même, Abraham doit passer aux actes (vv. 9-10), l'ange de YHWH intervient (vv. 11.15-18) et Abraham confère un nom à l'endroit (v. 14). Chaque scène comporte au moins une mention du lieu, sauf celle de la conversation entre Abraham et Isaac (vv. 7-8), mais elle se situe durant la marche, entre le moment où Abraham a vu le lieu (v. 4a) et celui où le père et le fils y arrivent (v. 9).

Indications de temps et de lieu parsèment le récit de signaux importants qui permettront à présent de découvrir l'une ou l'autre stratégie adoptée par le narrateur.

## II. Les critères du choix des scènes

Partons de la mention du «lieu». C'est Dieu qui le détermine et en fait il sera le seul à le faire jusqu'au bout. Abraham lui donnera

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peu de mots de longues périodes de temps, sauter certains faits («ellipses») ou, au contraire, raconter avec beaucoup de détails. La technique adoptée par le narrateur de Gn 22 consiste à sélectionner parmi tous les incidents et les dialogues qu'il aurait pu rapporter quelques épisodes plus prégnants de signification.

(<sup>8</sup>) Cette division ne contredit pas celle de ceux qui divisent le texte en deux parties plus longues (vv. 1-10 et 11-19) en raison du parallélisme entre le v. 1b et le v. 11. Cf. LAWLOR, «The Test», 19-20. Le v. 11 contient en effet la résolution du drame et signale le début du dénouement.

d'ailleurs un nom qui le rappellera à tout jamais (v. 14). Et immédiatement, ce lieu devient l'objet de trois lignes d'interprétation divergentes: pour le lecteur, comme pour Dieu, ce sera le lieu de l'épreuve (v. 1b), pour Abraham, celui du sacrifice (v. 2b), pour Isaac et pour les serviteurs, un simple endroit de pèlerinage, semble-t-il (v. 5b).

Le choix des différentes scènes est bien dicté par une stratégie commune. Ce sont des moments où la différence de perspective (entre le lecteur et Abraham, entre Dieu et Abraham et entre Abraham et ses serviteurs ou Isaac) apparaît avec plus d'intensité.

Plus précisément, il faut dire que, dans ces quelques scènes, le lecteur et les personnages ont non seulement des perspectives et des niveaux de connaissances différents, mais que, de plus, ils sont comme séparés par des cloisons étanches. Ainsi, comme beaucoup d'auteurs l'ont remarqué, le lecteur bénéficie d'emblée d'une situation privilégiée puisqu'il connaît l'intention de Dieu dès le point de départ<sup>(9)</sup>. Il vaut sans doute la peine d'ajouter deux choses à ce propos. Tout d'abord, cette stratégie crée un type particulier de tension dramatique en tant que le lecteur ne peut communiquer ce qu'il sait au personnage<sup>(10)</sup>. En second lieu, cette situation se retrouve à l'intérieur du récit: Dieu non plus ne peut communiquer sa véritable intention à Abraham avant la fin de l'épreuve; et Abraham lui-même ne peut dire à Isaac ou à ses serviteurs quel est le but de son voyage<sup>(11)</sup>.

<sup>(9)</sup> Cf. déjà B. JACOB, *Das erste Buch der Torah. Genesis* (Berlin 1934) 491; G. VON RAD, *Das erste Buch Mose. Genesis* (Göttingen 1976) 189; STERNBERG, *Poetics*, 268; pour plus d'informations cf. MAZOR, «Genesis 22», 81-82 (avec bibliographie).

<sup>(10)</sup> Cf. CHATMAN, *Story*, 59-60, («Suspense and Surprise»). Selon cet auteur, ceci forme l'essence du «suspense» («tension dramatique») de nombreux films ou récits: «we know what is going to happen, but we cannot communicate that information to the characters, with whom we have come to empathize» (59). Pour d'autres exemples bibliques, cf. Gn 27,26 et la réflexion de VON RAD, *Genesis*, 223, n. 2: «Beim küssen erreicht die Spannung den höchsten Grad, der Zuhörer ist nahe daran, hinauszuschreien...»; voir aussi Ex 14,8-10: le lecteur sait que les Egyptiens poursuivent les Israélites alors que ces derniers sont inconscients du fait; cf. J. L. SKA, *Le passage de la mer* (AnBib 109; Rome 1986) 62-64; la séparation d'Elie et d'Elisée (2 R 2,1-25); la fille de Jephthé (Jg 11,29-40).

<sup>(11)</sup> Ce dernier fait a été noté entre autres par B. VAWTER, *On Genesis. A New Reading* (Garden City 1977) 254.

Ceci entraîne deux conséquences. La première concerne la position du lecteur. Le parallélisme des diverses situations crée un effet d'empathie et de connivence. Ainsi, du point de vue de la connaissance de l'intrigue, le lecteur se trouve d'abord du côté du Dieu par rapport à Abraham, puis du côté d'Abraham par rapport à Isaac (ou aux serviteurs). Participant, au moins en partie, à l'univers de chacun des personnages du récit, le lecteur en est d'autant plus «impliqué». En particulier, il peut aisément reconstruire l'épreuve d'Abraham, puisque sa lecture est un reflet de la situation du patriarche qui doit taire à son fils l'essentiel de l'intrigue.

La seconde conséquence concerne le style des scènes centrales (vv. 2-10). Les silences, les objets et les gestes muets tendront à jouer un rôle plus important que les paroles qui doivent rester vagues. La technique adoptée est proche du «drame», de la représentation «scénique» du théâtre<sup>(12)</sup>. Après le v. 1a, le lecteur n'a plus accès au monde intérieur des personnages et, en langage technique, le «point de vue» («focalisation», «perspective») de l'ensemble est externe<sup>(13)</sup>.

En conclusion, et l'analyse suivante le montrera, une grande partie de la tension dramatique repose sur la question de savoir si Abraham va réussir à garder le silence jusqu'au bout. Son épreuve consiste en grande partie à devoir agir sans pouvoir parler à personne de la signification de ce «lieu» où il se rend. On peut dire que

(12) Sur cette technique de «représentation scénique» d'un long épisode par une série de brefs éclairages («spotlights»), cf. P. LUBBOCK, *The Craft of Fiction* (London 1921) 67-72, 110-123 et *passim*; LÄMMERT, *Bauformen*, 32, 92; F. K. STANZEL, *Theorie des Erzählens* (Göttingen 1985) 67-70, 97-99 et *passim*.

(13) LUBBOCK, *The Craft of Fiction*, 67-72, 110-123, 142, 172-187, 188-202, a été un des initiateurs des études sur le «point de vue»; cf. aussi W. BOOTH, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago 1983) 151-154. Le sujet est débattu et la terminologie n'est pas toujours claire. Cf. P. PUGLIATTI, *Lo sguardo nel racconto. Teorie e prassi del punto di vista* (Bologna 1985) pour une mise au point. Pour la Bible, cf. J. P. FOKKELMAN, *Narrative Art in Genesis. Specimens of Stylistic and Structural Analysis* (Assen-Amsterdam 1975) 50-52; R. ALTER, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York 1981) 54; STERNBERG, *The Poetics*, 52-53, 137-138, 144, 174-175, 243, 256, 257, 398, 404.

Pour la focalisation externe, cf. GENETTE, *Figures III*, 207-208. La focalisation est externe lorsque le lecteur n'a aucun accès direct aux pensées et aux sentiments des personnages d'un récit. Il ne peut les deviner qu'à partir de leurs actions ou de leurs paroles.

c'est ce problème de communication qui sous-tend tout le récit. Le schéma suivant devrait montrer à suffisance que les dialogues et les moments de narration silencieuse sous-tendent, au moins en partie, la structure du récit:

- A. Introduction (v. 1a): narration silencieuse.
- B. Scène 1 (vv. 1b-2): Dieu parle.
- C. Scène 2 (v. 3): narration silencieuse.
- D. Scène 3 (vv. 4-6): dialogue (Abraham et ses serviteurs).
- D'. Scène 4 (vv. 7-8): dialogue (Abraham et Isaac).
- C'. Scène 5 (vv. 9-11): narration silencieuse.
- B'. Scène 6 (vv. 12-14.15-18): l'ange de YHWH parle.
- A'. Epilogue (v. 19): narration silencieuse.

### III. Développement dramatique de la narration

Le but de ce paragraphe est de montrer à présent la progression entre les différents tableaux. Quelques éléments récurrents vont nous y aider. Entre autres la séquence verbale «prendre», «aller» et «sacrifier», les diverses énumérations, la liste des objets présents dans chaque scène<sup>(14)</sup>. Trois changements de «perspective» auront également une certaine portée sur la lecture.

#### 1. Première scène (vv. 1b-2)

L'ordre de Dieu ressemble à une vrille qui perfore le cœur d'Abraham. On y rencontre deux énumérations (la spécification de la victime; les actions à accomplir) et un «silence» dont la fonction sera à analyser plus en détail.

La première énumération du récit met à nu le drame du père de façon impitoyable; elle ne lui laisse aucune échappatoire: «ton fils, ton unique que tu aimes, Isaac». La tradition juive l'a bien compris et elle a fait de cette phrase un dialogue, exploitant ainsi les possibilités du texte<sup>(15)</sup>. La gradation est nette dans cette brève énuméra-

<sup>(14)</sup> Nous utilisons, dans un but différent, les observations de LACK, «Le sacrifice», 6-8.

<sup>(15)</sup> Cf. *Sanhedrin*, 89b; *Genesis Rabbah*, 55,7; Rashi (*Le Pentateuque. Genèse* [Paris 1971] 133); JACOB, *Genesis*, 493. Dieu aurait dit: «Prends ton

tion. Elle pointe sur le nom du fils unique et bien-aimé, Isaac. Ce nom une fois prononcé, aucune hésitation n'est possible. Isaac qui fut associé au rire (Gn 17,17; 18,12; 21,6; cf. 21,9; 26,8) devient à présent la source d'un drame.

Quel sera l'élément qui fera entrer le lecteur dans le monde du récit? C'est très probablement le silence d'Abraham qui suit l'ordre de Dieu. Ce n'est que par inférence que nous devinons ses sentiments, et tout est là: nous avons commencé à entrer dans la conscience silencieuse d'Abraham et le processus d'empathie est amorcé. La stratégie du narrateur est assez évidente: il laisse un «blanc» et le lecteur peut à loisir sonder cet espace vide. Il peut même le remplir grâce au vocabulaire employé par Dieu. En effet, un des seuls mots qui ressortissent au monde des émotions («celui que tu aimes» — 'āšer 'āhabtā) se trouve dans cette phrase de Dieu. Nul doute que l'épreuve portera sur ce point.

Les verbes qui spécifient l'ordre de Dieu sont aussi savamment agencés pour ne découvrir qu'en tout dernier lieu leur sens ultime: «prendre», «aller» et enfin «sacrifier»<sup>(16)</sup>. Puis la phrase s'ouvre sur le futur pour une dernière spécification à propos du «lieu» dont nous avons déjà parlé.

## 2. Deuxième scène (v. 3)

Les préparatifs du départ ont été bien analysés par un récent article de Y. Mazor<sup>(17)</sup>. Il note entre autre le fait qu'Abraham retarde jusqu'à la fin le geste qui lui rappelle le plus sa terrible mission: la préparation du bois du sacrifice. Cette nouvelle énumération mérite qu'on s'y attarde davantage, parce que c'est elle qui révèle le monde intérieur d'un patriarche silencieux.

D'abord, nous observons une certaine hiérarchie dans la façon de procéder d'Abraham, de l'âne aux serviteurs, des serviteurs à son fils, de son fils au bois du sacrifice. La mention d'Isaac apparaît comme un appendice dans la phrase hébraïque: «et il prit ses deux

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filis». Abraham répondit: «J'ai deux fils, Ismaël et Isaac». Dieu reprit: «Ton unique». Abraham: «Tous deux sont uniques». Dieu: «Celui que tu aimes». Abraham: «Je les aime tous les deux». Dieu dit enfin: «Isaac». Abraham n'eut plus rien à répondre.

<sup>(16)</sup> La séquence des verbes et leur fonction structurelle dans le récit ont été étudiées par LACK, «Le sacrifice», 5-8.

<sup>(17)</sup> MAZOR, «Genesis 22», 84-85.

serviteurs avec lui, et son fils Isaac, ...» (v. 3). La phrase trahit-elle l'hésitation d'Abraham? Le plus important à noter, cependant, est que cet ordre contient une savante progression. L'âne et les serviteurs, et même Isaac peuvent très bien faire partie d'un voyage quelconque. Ce n'est que la mention du «bois du sacrifice» qui indique clairement qu'Abraham obéit à l'ordre du Dieu<sup>(18)</sup>. Ce geste décisif enlève au lecteur l'ultime doute sur les intentions d'Abraham. C'est lui aussi qui rappelle le troisième verbe de l'ordre de Dieu, «sacrifier» qui n'est pas prononcé comme tel, au contraire des deux autres («prendre» et «aller»). De la sorte, Isaac se trouve associé d'emblée à la pensée du sacrifice, puisque la mention du «fils» et du «bois du sacrifice» se suivent immédiatement dans la phrase.

Par ailleurs, l'ordre des mots du v. 3 a lui aussi une signification. Au cours de la scène suivante, l'âne et les serviteurs resteront ensemble en vue de la montagne (v. 5) tandis qu'Isaac sera chargé du bois (v. 6) sur lequel il sera finalement lié durant la scène du sacrifice (v. 9). Enfin, le «bois» est le seul objet qui apparaisse dans la liste des préparatifs. Les étapes suivantes en feront découvrir d'autres au fur et à mesure que l'on se rapproche de l'endroit fatidique. Cette seconde scène se termine par une mention du «lieu» de destination des voyageurs, comme le v. 2.

### 3. Troisième scène (vv. 4-6)

Ici, la tension monte d'un cran. Le «lieu» est en vue, l'échéance se rapproche, et Abraham va devoir parler. Le narrateur nous le fait pressentir en restant fidèle à sa méthode. Il visualise quelques objets ou quelques actions en laissant le soin au lecteur d'en deviner l'impact sur le monde des sentiments d'Abraham. Un changement de «perspective», le dialogue d'Abraham avec ses serviteurs et les verbes employés sont les éléments les plus intéressants de cette scène.

Tout d'abord, le narrateur nous fait voir le «lieu» avec Abraham, au lieu de dire, par exemple, «Le troisième jour, ils arrivèrent au lieu indiqué par Dieu». Pourquoi ce changement de «perspecti-

(18) Il est donc difficile de supprimer ce bout de phrase du texte. C'est peut-être une glose, mais dans ce cas son auteur a été très bien inspiré. H. GUNKEL, *Genesis* (Göttingen 1910), à la suite de Holzinger, considère le passage comme une addition. LACK, «Le sacrifice», 5, également. C. WESTERMANN, *Genesis 12-36* (BK I,2; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1981) 438, est plus nuancé.

ve»<sup>(19)</sup>? La raison en est simple. C'est pour Abraham que la vue du «lieu» est déterminante, c'est lui qui est concerné en tout premier lieu<sup>(20)</sup>. Mais le narrateur ne signale que cette «vision», sans faire allusion aucune aux possibles remous qu'elle a pu provoquer chez le patriarche. A nouveau, le lecteur trouve un espace ouvert à sa perspicacité.

Ensuite, Abraham doit parler pour préciser d'une façon ou d'une autre le but de son voyage. Il surmonte l'obstacle et réussit à rester suffisamment vague pour que chacun, le lecteur, Abraham lui-même, Isaac et les deux serviteurs, puissent donner à ses paroles un sens acceptable, mais bien différent. Pour le lecteur, ces paroles peuvent avoir un sens proleptique. Abraham, sans s'en douter, dit la vérité, selon B. Jacob<sup>(21)</sup>.

Enfin, le narrateur reprend les verbes «prendre» et «aller» du v. 2. Le verbe «sacrifier» n'est toujours pas prononcé<sup>(22)</sup>, mais il apparaît à nouveau dans la mention du «bois du sacrifice» qui fait écho à la scène précédente (v. 3b).

A propos des objets énumérés, il faut noter une nette progression. Le moment du sacrifice approche. C'est pourquoi deux éléments du v. 3 restent en arrière, l'âne et les serviteurs, tandis que deux nouveaux objets arrivent sur scène; le feu et le couteau. Il ne manque que la victime, mais cette lacune n'affleure pas encore à la conscience des acteurs. Isaac porte le bois, comme il lui était associé au v. 3. Abraham se charge du feu et du couteau. Pourquoi? Il semble que, de ce fait, le narrateur fasse émerger dans le récit ce qui s'impose à la conscience d'Abraham, c'est-à-dire l'imminence du sacrifice. Cette conclusion, c'est bien sûr le lecteur qui la tire. Mais elle lui est suggérée par ce que le narrateur visualise à cette étape du

<sup>(19)</sup> Cf. n. 13. Changement de «perspective» ou de «focalisation»: le narrateur à présent voit «avec les yeux» d'Abraham ce que voit Abraham, comme il le voit («focalisation interne»). Sur ce point cf. GENETTE, *Figures III*, 183-224; IDEM, *Nouveau discours du récit* (Paris 1983) 43-52. Sur la séquence *ns' 'enayîm / r'h*, cf. C. CONROY, *Absalom Absalom!* Narrative and Language in 2 Sam 13-20 (AnBib 81; Rome 1978) 71, n. 111.

<sup>(20)</sup> Peut-être peut-on interpréter ainsi le «interest point of view» de CHATMAN, *Story*, 152-158. Le changement de «perspective» est commandé par le fait que c'est le personnage le plus «intéressé» par la découverte qui devient le centre de perception.

<sup>(21)</sup> JACOB, *Genesis*, 495-496.

<sup>(22)</sup> Cf. LACK, «Le sacrifice», 6-7.



récit comme à la précédente<sup>(23)</sup>. Le fait que le couteau soit le dernier objet mentionné dans cette phrase lui donne toute sa puissance évocatrice. Il rejoint ainsi Isaac (v. 2a) et le bois du sacrifice (v. 3b) qui occupaient une position identique dans les énumérations précédentes et produisaient des effets semblables sur le lecteur qui ne peut manquer de les associer.

#### 4. Quatrième scène (vv. 7-8)

La scène de la conversation entre Abraham et Isaac a souvent inspiré les exégètes<sup>(24)</sup>. Trois faits sont cependant à noter: la question d'Isaac à propos de la victime, sa «perspective», et la réponse d'Abraham ouvrant sur un futur indéterminé.

La question d'Isaac porte sur la victime<sup>(25)</sup>. Ce n'est pas étonnant après l'examen des objets de la scène précédente.

En second lieu, c'est ici et ici seulement que le récit fait parler Isaac et il nous dévoile enfin sa propre «perspective». L'intensité dramatique du moment repose en effet sur la confrontation entre la «perspective d'Isaac» — ce qu'il «perçoit» et le rend perplexe —, et ce qu'Abraham sait sans pouvoir le dire. Si le narrateur décide de faire valoir le «point de vue» d'Isaac à cet endroit du récit, c'est bien parce qu'il est à présent concerné plus que n'importe qui.

Et d'abord, que voit Isaac? Sa perception, introduite par la par-

(23) Pour d'autres explications, cf. GUNKEL, *Genesis*, 237: le père ne veut pas que son fils se blesse, «ein besonders hübscher Zug»; VON RAD, *Das zweite Buch Mose*, 191, va dans le même sens. MAZOR, «Genesis 22», 85-88, pense plutôt qu'Abraham cherche à faire croire à Isaac qu'il s'agit d'un sacrifice normal en lui laissant l'honneur de porter le bois.

(24) Cf. par exemple GUNKEL, *Genesis*, 237-238, («ein Meisterstück der psychologischen Schilderung... So erzählt die Sage mit tiefem Mitgefühl; der Erzähler hat dabei Tränen in den Augen»). JACOB, *Genesis*, 496-497, («Sie [Abrahams Antwort] führt bis dicht an die Lösung, um dann abzubrechen und beide wieder ihren Gedanken zu überlassen»); VON RAD, *Das zweite Buch Mose*, 191; E. A. SPEISER, *Genesis* (Anchor Bible; Garden City 1964) 165 («The short and simple sentence... covers what is perhaps the most poignant and eloquent silence in all literature»); VAWTER, *On Genesis*, 254; WESTERMANN, *Genesis*, 440-441.

(25) La tradition juive surtout a montré l'ambivalence de la réponse d'Abraham. «Mon fils», au v. 8, peut être compris comme un vocatif ou comme une apposition à «l'agneau du sacrifice». Cf. STERNBERG, *Poetics*, 192.

ticule *hinneh* (v. 7b)<sup>(26)</sup>, contient le fameux mot *'ôlâ* qui nous poursuit depuis le début. Abraham a «vu» le lieu du sacrifice. Isaac «voit» le bois et le feu, mais ne «voit» pas la victime. Ces «visions» se complètent, bien sûr, mais uniquement dans la «perspective» d'Abraham et du lecteur. Isaac, pourtant, n'est pas loin de deviner le sens du drame qui est en train de se jouer et dont il est un acteur inconscient.

C'est probablement ce dernier fait qui nous permettra de mieux saisir le mécanisme qui donne à ce passage une intensité dramatique aussi forte. Car il faut dire non seulement que les différents niveaux de connaissance et les différentes perspectives y apparaissent plus nettement qu'ailleurs. Il y a davantage, puisque les personnages deviennent *conscients* des limites de leurs «perspectives» propres et de ce qui les empêche de comprendre totalement ce qui se passe. Isaac découvre un «objet manquant» dans l'appareil emporté par son père. Sa question oblige le patriarche à dévoiler en partie son jeu. D'une part il montre, comme dans la scène précédente, qu'il ne peut parler et le lecteur en devine les raisons. D'autre part, il renvoie lui-même à sa propre ignorance puisqu'il se réfère à un plan de Dieu dont il ne détient pas la clé. Là, le lecteur est dans une meilleure position depuis le v. 1, sans qu'il puisse toutefois élucider complètement le mystère de cette «épreuve». Somme toute, Isaac devient conscient de son ignorance, sa question rend Abraham conscient de la sienne, et ce dialogue fait découvrir au lecteur qu'il ignore lui aussi une part du drame. Chaque ignorance renvoie à une autre, de même que personne ne peut communiquer ce qu'il sait à ceux qui l'ignorent. Il va sans dire que l'empathie du lecteur pour Abraham ne peut qu'augmenter.

Enfin, Abraham réussit à surmonter un second obstacle sans rompre son silence. Sa réponse est de nouveau évasive, mais elle est

<sup>(26)</sup> Sur la fonction de cette particule, cf. L. ALONSO SCHÖKEL, «Nota estilística sobre la particula *hinneh*», *Bib* 37 (1956) 74-80; C. J. LABUSCHAGNE, «The Particles *hen* and *hinneh*», *Syntax and Meaning. Studies in Hebrew Syntax and Biblical Exegesis* (OTS 18; Leiden 1973) 1-15; CONROY, *Absalom*, 132-133; D. J. MCCARTHY, «The Uses of *whinneh* in Biblical Hebrew», *Bib* 61 (1980) 330-342; A. BERLIN, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narratives* (Bible and Literature Series; Sheffield 1983) 62-64, 92-95; STERNBERG, *Poetics*, cf. index sous «free indirect discourse»; S. KOGUT, «On the Meaning and the Syntactical Status of *hinneh* in Biblical Hebrew», *Studies in Bible* (Scripta Hierosolymitana 31; [ed. S. JAPHET] Jerusalem 1986) 133-154.

aussi proleptique. Abraham dit une chose dont il ne peut découvrir le sens caché et qui touche, comme nous venons de le voir, à ce qui se situe au-delà de sa propre «perspective»<sup>(27)</sup>. A partir de maintenant, il restera silencieux jusqu'au bout. La narration a en effet épuisé les possibilités de rapprochement entre les perspectives d'Abraham et d'Isaac.

### 5. Cinquième scène (vv. 9-10)

La scène du sacrifice porte la tension dramatique à son sommet en jouant davantage sur le rythme de la narration. H. Gunkel et G. von Rad notent que les préparatifs ralentissent le récit<sup>(28)</sup>. A ce sujet, on peut en outre remarquer que le «tempo» se ralentit progressivement. Les actions prennent de moins en moins de temps et sont de plus en plus détaillées. En d'autres termes, la relation entre «temps racontant» et «temps raconté» se rapproche de plus en plus de l'équivalence (sans l'atteindre cependant)<sup>(29)</sup>. La construction de l'autel a duré plus longtemps que l'action d'arranger le bois, ce qui a pris moins de temps que de lier Isaac et de le mettre sur l'autel... Ce ralentissement est particulièrement visible au v. 10: Abraham étend la main, prend le couteau. L'objet fatidique réapparaît et l'attente atteint son point de rupture. C'est comme si le narrateur retardait jusqu'à l'extrême le geste définitif. Avec J.I. Lawlor, il faut noter de plus que la phrase reste en suspens parce qu'on passe soudain d'une chaîne de formes narratives (*wayyiqṭōl*) à un infinitif<sup>(30)</sup>.

Par ailleurs, la scène est plus objective que jamais. Seuls les gestes comptent et ils font apparaître la détermination d'un Abraham désormais complètement muet. Nulle parole, nulle réaction, pas même celle d'Isaac au moment où il a dû se rendre compte qu'il était la victime du sacrifice.

(27) VON RAD, *Das zweite Buch Mose*, 191.

(28) GUNKEL, *Genesis*, 238, «das Tempo wird mit Willen ritardando»; VON RAD, *Das zweite Buch Mose*, 191, «Bei den Verrichtungen auf dem Berg verlangsamt sich die Erzählung noch einmal».

(29) Sur cette distinction, cf. n. 6. Cf. à ce propos la réflexion de JACOB, *Genesis*, 498, à propos de la construction de l'autel et de la disposition du bois: «sicherlich eine Arbeit von Stunden» («temps raconté»).

(30) LAWLOR, «The Test», 23-24.

Comme chaque scène, celle-ci se conclut par un regard vers le futur, mais un futur on ne peut plus tragique. Est-ce cependant un présage? Le texte n'emploie pas le verbe *'lh* pour parler du sacrifice, mais *šhṭ*. La suite va bien vite résoudre cette énigme.

#### 6. Sixième scène (vv. 11-14.15-19)

Dans ce dernier tableau, trois détails méritent de retenir l'attention: un nouveau changement de «perspective» (v. 13), la liste des verbes de ce même v. 13 et la fonction du double discours de l'ange de YHWH.

Le v. 13 contient un changement de «point de vue». C'est avec les yeux d'Abraham que le narrateur fait découvrir le béliet pris par les cornes dans un buisson. C'est la seconde fois qu'il adopte la «perspective» du patriarche. La première fois, il s'agissait de la montagne du sacrifice (v. 4). Cette fois, de la victime. Le lien saute aux yeux, surtout si l'on se souvient de la question d'Isaac au v. 7, où le narrateur avait laissé émerger la «perspective» de la victime potentielle. Comme de coutume, la répercussion de cette vision sur Abraham n'est pas décrite. Le style indirect libre adopté ici et introduit par *wḥinneḥ*<sup>(31)</sup> renforce encore, s'il était nécessaire, l'objectivité de la découverte. La narration en reste à la simple perception et refuse de faire parler Abraham ou Isaac.

Ce même verset 13 contient la liste des verbes du v. 2, mais pour la première fois, elle est complète («prendre», «aller», «sacrifier»; *lqh*, *hlk*, *'lh l'ōlā*)<sup>(32)</sup>. Le *taḥat* qui précède *b'no* est le mot en qui se condense le changement de situation et ce qui a dû libérer Abraham (et Isaac) de leur angoisse.

Enfin, si Abraham est toujours muet, même après cet heureux dénouement, la narration ne l'est pas. Elle devient même très loquace. Mais c'est l'ange qui parle, après un long silence du ciel. Ce double discours contient en fait tout ce que le lecteur veut savoir

(31) Sur le changement de «perspective», cf. supra n. 16; sur la fonction de *wḥinneḥ*, voir n. 23; sur la séquence *ns' 'enanyim/r'h/wḥinneḥ*, cf. CONROY, *Absalom*, 71 n. 111; sur le style indirect libre, cf. entre autres CHATMAN, *Story*, 198, 209; dans la Bible, cf. M. WEISS, «Einiges über die Bauformen des Erzählens in der Bibel», *VT* 3 (1963) 456-475; STERNBERG, *Poetics*, 52-53, 137-138 et *passim* («free indirect style»). Le terme a probablement été forgé par M. LIPS, *Le style indirect libre* (Paris 1926).

(32) Cf. la structure de LACK, «Le sacrifice», 7-8.

d'Abraham<sup>(33)</sup>. Un seul mot résume ses sentiments, *yārē'* (v. 12). Le verset reprend la phrase de l'ordre de Dieu (v. 2) en plus bref, mais le lien est évident. Ces deux versets sont les seuls où il soit fait allusion à ses sentiments: son amour pour son fils (v. 2) et sa crainte envers Dieu (v. 13)<sup>(34)</sup>. Le drame a montré lequel l'avait emporté. Somme toute, le lecteur comprend maintenant, *a posteriori*, pourquoi Abraham n'a pas parlé. Son sentiment de révérence envers Dieu a fait taire en lui l'attachement à son fils. Certes, le lecteur a pu le deviner. Mais seul l'ange de YHWH est à même de l'affirmer avec autorité.

En outre, aux vv. 15-18, la voix céleste loue Abraham et lui ouvre un nouvel avenir, celui qu'il avait accepté de sacrifier. La louange vient en son temps, après une narration dépourvue de commentaires et réduite à l'essentiel<sup>(35)</sup>. Le lecteur la fait plus volontiers sienne qu'il en a longtemps senti la nécessité. Quant au renouvellement des promesses, il correspond exactement, à notre avis, à ce qu'Abraham a pu ressentir. Le fils de la promesse lui a été rendu avec tout ce qu'il signifie pour son avenir. Si c'est l'ange de Dieu qui le lui confirme, c'est pour donner à ce qui aurait pu n'être qu'un sentiment de soulagement très humain une dimension plus profonde. C'est encore ici la voix la plus autorisée qui parle.

Enfin, il semble que de ce fait le narrateur reste complètement fidèle à sa stratégie d'objectivation. Le discours de l'ange de YHWH transforme les sentiments cachés d'Abraham en une série de paroles qui scellent l'avenir de façon définitive. Il en va de l'histoire d'un peuple, de l'obéissance de l'ancêtre d'Israël et non seulement des sentiments d'un père envers son fils<sup>(36)</sup>. Et cette promesse de Dieu

(33) Les versets 15-19 sont considérés par la plupart des interprètes comme une addition. Cf. WESTERMANN, *Genesis*, 445. Notre propos sera de montrer comment cette addition s'intègre dans le récit.

(34) Cf. LACK, «Le sacrifice», 7-8.

(35) Cf. STERNBERG, *Poetics*, 55: «Having presented some drama without any overt commentary, though with sufficient clues distributed along the way to guide the alert, the narrative will often enlighten the naive or superficial toward the end... Thus, the neutral style of the Binding of Isaac is immediately followed by divine praise...».

(36) Pour plus de détails sur cette section, par exemple, sur la division en deux parties (1-10.11-19) basée sur les deux appels de Dieu, cf. LAWLOR, «The Test», 19-20; sur les rapports souvent notés entre 22,2 et 12,1 (deux seuls emplois de *lek-lekā* dans le cycle d'Abraham) et leur signification (en

transforme la fin du passage en une vision positive alors que chaque scène, jusqu'à présent, s'était conclue sur une note d'attente plutôt tragique.

### 7. L'épilogue (v. 19)

Rien ne vient rompre le silence du retour. L'atmosphère est suggérée par la reprise du verbe *šwb* (v. 19a) qui fait écho à la «prophétie» d'Abraham au v. 5b. L'expression «ils marchèrent ensemble» rappelle bien sûr les vv. 6b et 8b. Le lecteur est à même de faire la différence entre ces emplois et le narrateur fait une dernière fois appel à son imagination pour combler les «vides» de cette finale aussi sobre et dépouillée que le reste du récit.

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La narration de Gn 22 oblige sans cesse le lecteur à lire de façon active. Il lui faut, à partir de quelques pièces, reconstruire tout le tableau et lui donner sa «troisième dimension». C'est là aussi que gît en grande partie la profondeur de l'«arrière-fond» de ce récit biblique dont a si bien parlé Erich Auerbach<sup>(37)</sup>. En fin de compte, cela signifie que le lecteur est invité, comme le dit S. E. McEvenue, à

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12,1, Abraham abandonne son passé, en 22,2 il doit sacrifier son futur), cf. WESTERMANN, *Genesis*, 436-437 (avec bibliographie); MAZOR, «Genesis 22», 82-83; H. SHANKS, «Illuminations: Abraham Cut Off from His Past and Future by the Awkward Command: 'Go You!'», *BRev* 3 (1987) 8-9. Cf. en outre: R. KILIAN, *Isaaks Opferung. Zur Überlieferungsgeschichte von Gen 22* (SBS 44; Stuttgart 1970); G. W. COATS, «Abraham's Sacrifice of Faith: A Form-Critical Study of Genesis 22», *Int* 27 (1973) 389-400; J. L. CRENSHAW, «Journey into Oblivion: A Structural Analysis of Genesis 22:1-19», *Soundings* 58 (1975) 243-256.

<sup>(37)</sup> E. AUERBACH, *Mimesis: Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der Abendländischen Literatur* (Bern 1946) 12-17. Il compare Gn 22 à la scène de l'Odyssée où Euryclée reconnaît son maître à une cicatrice en lui lavant les pieds (*Odyssée*, XIX). Alors qu'Homère est prodigue de détails, la Bible est d'une sobriété frappante. Si, pour le poète grec, tout est à l'«avant-plan», dans la Bible, l'essentiel est à l'«arrière-plan». Pour un commentaire, cf. L. ALONSO SCHÖKEL, «Erzählkunst im Buche der Richter», *Bib* 42 (1961) 143-172, surtout 143-146; STERNBERG, *Poetics*, 29-32 et *passim*.

entrer totalement dans le monde du récit. Mais, avec M. Sternberg, nous inclinons à dire que c'est pour découvrir la détermination d'Abraham, au-delà de son débat intérieur qui reste à jamais scellé.

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#### SUMMARY

The choice of different scenes of Gen 22 (vv. 1a.1b-2.3.4-6.7-8.9-10.11-14.[15-18].19) is governed by different narrative strategies which converge toward the same goal: to bring out the moments in which the different perspectives and levels of knowledge cross. These are especially the moments when God and the reader are in a situation similar to that of Abraham, who cannot communicate to Isaac the real purpose of his pilgrimage. Not being able to speak constitutes one of the key elements of Abraham's trial; it is at the origin of the extremely objective style and of the dramatic tension of the passage.

**«C'est lui qui a ouvert la voie».**

**La finale du prologue johannique**

Sur l'interprétation exacte de ἐξηγήσατο en Jn 1,18, les traducteurs et commentateurs sont encore toujours divisés. Presque tous se départagent cependant entre deux options fondamentales. La plupart comprennent ici ἐξηγήσατο au sens de «expliquer» ou «raconter». M.-É. Boismard par exemple, qui avait d'abord traduit «a conduit» (cf. *infra*), s'est rallié, dans sa *Synopse*, à l'exégèse courante: «Celui-là a raconté»<sup>(1)</sup>. On soupçonne que les défenseurs de cette interprétation ont subi (sans doute inconsciemment) l'influence de la tradition latine (*enarravit*, *enarrat*, *interpretator*)<sup>(2)</sup>. Mais tout aussi décisive

(1) M.-É. BOISMARD-A. LAMOUILLE, *Synopse des quatre évangiles en français*. III: *L'Évangile de Jean* (Paris 1978) 76. Pour la traduction que M.-É. Boismard proposait en 1952 («c'est lui qui a conduit»), voir plus loin p. 342. Comparer J. MATEOS-J. BARRETO, *El evangelio di Juan* (Madrid 1979): «El ha sido la explicación»; M. GIRARD, «Analyse structurelle de Jn 1,1-18», *ScEs* 35 (1983) 5-31: «Celui-ci fit-exégèse» (p. 17), traduction qui est à la limite du bon goût. Voir encore P. DIEL-J. SOLOTAREFF, *Le Symbolisme dans l'Évangile de Jean* (Paris 1983) 70, note: «Le texte original dit littéralement: le Fils unique a été son interprète, a été l'explicateur de ses intentions» (c'est nous qui soulignons).

L'étude qu'on va lire a été occasionnée par l'article tout récent de R. ROBERT, «La double intention du mot final du prologue johannique», *RevThom* 87 (1987) 435-441, qui a tout à fait raison de mettre en question cette exégèse courante de Jn 1,18; son article ne peut que stimuler notre intérêt, car il présente une solution nouvelle; nous nous proposons ici de l'examiner en détail.

(2) La Vulgate traduit: *ipse enarravit*, ce que R. Robert commente (p. 436): «C'est lui qui rapporta en détail (ou expliqua, commenta)». Il renvoie aussi aux principales citations de Jn 1,18 dans le texte latin de l'*Adversus haereses* d'Irénée (III, 11,6; IV, 6,3; 20,6.11): ces deux derniers textes sont une citation formelle de la traduction latine de Jn 1,18 (... *ipse enarravit*), que l'éditeur d'Irénée, A. Rousseau, traduit pourtant: «c'est lui qui l'a révélé»; en III, 11,6 et IV, 6,3, on a le présent *enarrat eum*, équivalent de ἐξηγᾶται (présent continu), que Rousseau (en III, 11,6) traduit «le fait connaître»; on trouve aussi deux fois un substantif: *enarrator*. . . *Patris* (IV, 20,7) et



ve a pû être l'influence de quelques lexicographes modernes du NT (Grimm, Zorell, Zerwick), auxquels s'est joint récemment C. Spicq: «Le sens certain de ce verbe dans la Bible est 'raconter, narrer' (...). Dans ses cinq emplois, saint Luc ne connaît pas d'autre acception<sup>(3)</sup>. Il n'y a donc [...] aucune raison de lui en substituer une autre dans Jn 1,18: 'Un Fils unique, Dieu, qui est dans le sein du Père Celui-là l'a raconté'»<sup>(4)</sup>. La question, dirait-on, est réglée sans difficulté. Mais il est permis de penser que l'argumentation est un peu courte. Si la chose était si simple, tout le monde serait d'accord. Cependant, c'est un fait, un autre groupe de commentateurs s'oriente plutôt vers des verbes tels que «faire connaître», «révéler», «dévoiler» (BJ, Osty, la Bible de Maredsous, la TOB, G. Rochais)<sup>(5)</sup>.

Nous-même, pour respecter d'une part l'emploi absolu du verbe ἐξηγεῖσθαι, mais d'autre part aussi l'importance du thème de la ré-

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*interpretator Patris* (IV, 20,11, et non pas IV, 20,7, comme écrit R. Robert), qui recouvrent certainement ἐξηγητής de l'original grec; or, l'un et l'autre sont traduits par A. Rousseau: «le Révélateur du Père»; le *interpretator Patris* de IV, 20,11 sert à expliquer que le Verbe «montrait la gloire du Père et révélait (ἐξηγεῖτο, rétroversion) les 'économies'». Dans ces différents textes, c'est donc bien l'idée de révélation qui domine dans l'emploi de ce mot. Et il nous semble insuffisant, pour l'expliquer, de dire que c'est simplement «à cause du développement qui l'accompagne», comme le fait Robert. Lui-même comprend autrement ces références d'Irénée à Jn 1,18: «Le Verbe incarné exprime et manifeste le Père invisible» (ibid.). La question est donc la suivante: pour la traduction de ces textes d'Irénée, faut-il donner priorité à «exprimer» ou bien à «révéler»? Le verbe *peut-il* avoir ce deuxième sens? Cf. *infra*. En ce qui concerne Irénée, voir Ph. BACQ, *De l'ancienne à la nouvelle Alliance selon S. Irénée* (Paris-Namur 1978) 69, n. 2 et 324-325, qui opte plutôt pour «révéler»: «C'était la révélation donnée par la parole qui était mise en relief (ἀνεξηγητόν\*, ἐξηγεῖται\*)» (p. 325).

<sup>(3)</sup> Cf. Lc 24,35; Ac 10,8; 15,12.14; 21,19. Le verbe ne paraît nulle part dans le NT, sinon dans ces textes de Luc et dans Jn 1,18.

<sup>(4)</sup> C. SPICQ, *Notes de lexicographie néo-testamentaire*, I (Fribourg 1978) 256. Il est intéressant de noter que telle n'est pas l'opinion de F. BÜCHSEL, art. ἐξηγέομαι, *TWNT*, II, 910: après avoir constaté que le deuxième sens du verbe dans le grec non biblique est «ausführen, darlegen, erzählen», il ajoute cependant que pour ἐξηγήσατο de Jn 1,18, le sens de «erklären» est exclu; et il conclut: «Es muss dann entsprechend dem religiösen Sprachgebrauch im Griechischen als 'offenbaren' verstanden werden». Voir nos remarques à ce sujet dans *La vérité dans Saint Jean*, I (Roma 1977) 278.

<sup>(5)</sup> Pour une liste plus complète des versions françaises, voir notre ouvrage *La vérité*, I, 213; cf. en outre G. ROCHAIS, «La formation du prologue (Jn 1,1-18)», *ScEs* 37 (1985) 36.

vélotion dans S. Jean et l'emphase mise ici sur le pronom ἐκεῖνος nous avons proposé une traduction un peu audacieuse, qui fut reprise par d'autres: «Il fut, lui, la révélation»<sup>(6)</sup>.

Mais jusqu'à présent, un seul auteur, à notre connaissance, le P. Boismard, s'était risqué à introduire ici le sens premier de ἐξηγέομαι: «conduire, guider»<sup>(7)</sup>. Malheureusement, à cette fin, il avait cru devoir faire subir au texte un profond remaniement: «Dieu, personne ne l'a jamais vu, sinon le Fils unique; *dans le sein du Père*, c'est lui qui *a conduit*»<sup>(8)</sup>. Avec de bonnes raisons, R. Robert fait remarquer, dans son article récent, que «la critique s'est montrée peu favorable à cette hypothèse, abandonnée depuis par son auteur»<sup>(9)</sup>. Néanmoins, il y avait une intuition juste dans cette interprétation audacieuse du P. Boismard. C'est peut-être ce qu'a senti Robert. Car voici le fait curieux: il reprend à son tour, pour ἐξηγέομαι en Jn 1,18, le sens fondamental de «conduire» (en lui adjoignant toutefois une autre signification, celle de «raconter»); mais il a le mérite, cette fois, de n'introduire aucune modification dans le texte du prologue: son exégèse est basée uniquement sur des raisons d'ordre lexicographique et exégétique.

Cette interprétation nouvelle de R. Robert prolonge et complète celle qu'il avait proposée il y a trois ans pour les mots précédents du même verset<sup>(10)</sup>. On peut dire que ces deux articles, pris ensemble, constituent un véritable tournant dans l'exégèse de Jn 1,18. Cette lecture très suggestive de la finale du prologue mérite qu'on l'examine avec le plus grand soin; car, si on l'adopte, elle a des conséquences importantes pour la compréhension de l'ensemble du prologue et même pour celle de tout le IV<sup>e</sup> évangile que ce texte introduit. Avant d'entreprendre la discussion critique de cette nouvelle exégèse, présentons synthétiquement la position de l'auteur. Il commence par un préambule lexicographique, où il rappelle les deux sens de ἐξη-

(6) Cf. *La vérité*, I, 228. Cette traduction a été reprise dans le commentaire italien de S. A. Panimolle.

(7) Cf. les grands dictionnaires: «conduire, guider» (premier sens indiqué dans Bailly); «to be leader of» (Liddell-Scott), ce qui est mieux.

(8) M.-É. BOISMARD, «'Dans le sein du Père' (Jn 1,18)», *RB* 59 (1952) 23-29 (cf. p. 31).

(9) «La double intention» (cit. n. 1), 438.

(10) R. ROBERT, «'Celui qui est de retour dans le sein du Père' (Jean, 1,18)», *RevThom* 85 (1985) 458-463.

γέομαι: a) guider, conduire jusqu'au terme; b) expliquer, interpréter. Mais il observe fort bien que le problème posé par notre verset, c'est que le verbe y est employé sans complément. L'auteur cherche une solution à cette difficulté en appliquant ici un usage bien attesté ailleurs dans S. Jean, celui de donner un «double sens» à un mot: ἐξηγήσατο, pense-t-il, a ici les deux sens; il signifie à la fois «raconter» et «guider». Voici dès lors son interprétation: «En venant raconter Dieu aux hommes le Fils les a guidés vers lui: ce pourrait être un résumé de l'Incarnation» (p. 438). En finale, il propose d'abord comme traduction encore provisoire: «*C'est lui qui montra la route*» (p. 441). Mais comme, dans cette phrase, il ne trouve rien du «second sens» qu'il croit présent dans le verbe, il se rallie à celle du missel: «*C'est lui qui conduisit à le connaître*» (qu'il soit permis de remarquer que, dans la traduction officielle de la liturgie, la forme verbale de «conduire» n'est pas «conduisit» mais «a conduit»).

Est-ce sous l'influence du lectionnaire que l'auteur s'est peu à peu orienté vers cette interprétation? Nous l'ignorons. Toujours est-il qu'elle est nouvelle. Pour ce qui est de l'idée de découvrir dans le mot final du prologue une «double intention», R. Robert présente des indices que nous analyserons plus loin. Mais dès à présent on se demande pourquoi ce double sens — s'il y en a un — ne pourrait pas être «conduire» et «révéler», plutôt que «conduire» et «expliquer». Il est vrai que l'auteur exclut que le verbe ἐξηγεῖσθαι puisse signifier «révéler»; mais il l'affirme pour des motifs purement lexicographiques. La chose étrange cependant, c'est qu'en définitive il adopte la traduction du missel où cette idée est présente. D'autre part, on ne peut ignorer le fait que la plupart des grands commentateurs grecs du IV<sup>e</sup> évangile, tels que Chrysostome, Théophylacte et Euthymius, ont bel et bien découvert dans le verbe l'idée de révélation<sup>(1)</sup>. La divergence s'explique donc probablement par des raisons

(<sup>1</sup>) Cf. G. GENNARO, «Il Dio 'invisibile' e il Figlio 'unigenito' (Jn 1,18) secondo l'interpretazione patristica», *RivB* 4 (1956) 159-178; il écrit p. 178, au sujet de Chrysostome: «L'ἐξηγεῖσθαι definisce il contenuto della rivelazione, data dal Logos monogenito e incarnato». Pour être précis, disons plutôt que Chrysostome recourt à l'idée de «doctrine claire» (celle que le Christ nous apporte au sujet du Père): voir le *In Joan.*, 15,9: Ἐξηγήσατο τὴν τρανοτέραν καὶ σαφεστέραν δείκνυσι διδασκαλίαν... Ἡ τοίνυν ἐξήγησις ἐνταῦθα τὸ σαφέστερον διδασκαλίας δηλοῖ (PG 59, 100); dans le même sens Théophylacte (PG 123, 1164 C-D), et Euthymius: ἐξηγήσατο, συνέταξεν,

d'exégèse et de théologie plutôt que de lexicographie. En outre, faisons remarquer que le sens de «raconter» ou «expliquer», que l'auteur cherche à maintenir ici (mais en même temps que le sens de «conduire») fait réellement difficulté, et cette fois pour des raisons directement lexicographiques et sémantiques: «On n'explique pas Dieu», écrivait déjà le P. Lagrange<sup>(12)</sup>; disons de même: on ne *raconte* pas Dieu, on n'*exprime* pas Dieu<sup>(13)</sup>. Nous préciserons cette difficulté plus loin, du point de vue strictement philologique. Par contre, l'idée de réintroduire ici — on peut dire presque pour la première fois dans l'histoire de l'exégèse — le sens fondamental de ἐξηγέομαι, à savoir «conduire», nous semble particulièrement heureuse. Mais il faudra bien rendre compte du fait étrange, totalement négligé jusqu'ici, que ἐξηγήσατο est employé d'une manière absolue: il n'a ni complément de personne («servir de guide à *quelqu'un*», «conduire *quelqu'un*») ni complément circonstanciel de lieu («conduire vers...»)<sup>(14)</sup>. Il s'agira de tirer le maximum de profit d'un tel emploi absolu de ἐξηγέομαι (au sens de «être le guide») dans la littérature grecque, où on trouve plusieurs exemples, alors que dans la Bible (LXX et NT), en dehors de Jn 1,18, il n'existe aucun cas.

Une double enquête, dès lors, doit être entreprise: d'abord, une analyse lexicographique, mais qui devra être plus fouillée, plus précise et plus systématique que celles de C. Spicq et R. Robert; puis, une étude exégétique, mais qui ne fera que prolonger les indications de ce dernier. L'importance théologique de cette double analyse se dégagera d'elle-même à la fin.

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ἐδίδαξε (PG 129, 1125 D). L'ἐξηγήσεις apportée par le Fils, c'est donc la «doctrine» sur le Dieu invisible.

<sup>(12)</sup> M.-J. LAGRANGE, *L'Évangile selon saint Jean* (Paris 1925) 28.

<sup>(13)</sup> Ce sont pourtant les formules qu'utilise ROBERT: «En venant raconter Dieu aux hommes...» (p. 438); «le Christ a *exprimé* Dieu» (p. 441); c'est nous qui soulignons.

<sup>(14)</sup> Mais il faudra encore, pour le sens premier du verbe, distinguer différentes nuances («être le chef», puis au sens transitif, «diriger») et différentes constructions grammaticales (voir plus loin p. 345-346 et n. 16). C'est ce sens premier, mais compris comme «conduire», que supposait le P. Boismard dans son article de 1952 (cf. n. 8): «Dans le sein du Père c'est lui qui *a conduit*». Cependant, pour respecter l'emploi absolu du verbe, il a laissé «a conduit» sans détermination, ce qui est étrange (*qui a-t-il conduit?*).

Il fallait plutôt recourir à un autre aspect du sens premier du verbe, quand il est, comme ici, employé de manière absolue. Voir aussi les difficultés que nous faisons dans *La vérité*, I, 213-214.

## I. Étude lexicographique

La diversité des constructions possibles de ἐξηγέομαι qu'indiquent les dictionnaires est impressionnante; elle montre combien de nuances différentes ce verbe peut prendre; il n'est pas toujours facile de les distinguer. C'est surtout à ces constructions diverses que nous serons attentifs, particulièrement à l'emploi absolu du verbe que l'on retrouve en Jn 1,18.

1. *Les divers sens de ἐξηγέομαι*

Voici, d'après Bailly, les deux sens fondamentaux de ἐξηγέομαι: 1) «conduire, guider»; d'où: «diriger, gouverner»; 2) «conduire jusqu'au terme» (métaphoriquement); d'où: «exposer, expliquer». P. Chantraine, quant à lui, précise quelque peu; il nuance davantage, en distinguant trois sens: «être le chef, guider, expliquer»<sup>(15)</sup>. On remarquera que le mot «conduire» (au sens transitif) n'est plus repris.

a) Le sens premier de ἐξηγέομαι («être le chef» ou «conduire», selon qu'on suit Chantraine ou Bailly), ne se trouve pas dans la Bible; c'était le seul argument du P. Spicq pour l'exclure en Jn 1,18. R. Robert propose cependant de le redécouvrir dans notre passage. Dans le grec non biblique, il est d'ordinaire accompagné d'une détermination qui indique sur quel groupe s'exerce l'action du verbe. Contrairement à ce qu'on pourrait attendre, les personnes que l'on guide ou dont on est le chef ne sont pas indiquées à l'accusatif (qui aurait alors la valeur d'un régime direct et donnerait au verbe un sens différent)<sup>(16)</sup>, mais soit au génitif (la nuance est alors plutôt:

<sup>(15)</sup> P. CHANTRAINE, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, I (Paris 1968) 405; pareillement, le *Thesaurus* (III, 1296) donne comme premier sens: «Dux sum, Praesum».

<sup>(16)</sup> Quand il est suivi d'un accusatif de régime direct, le verbe signifie plutôt «dominer», «gouverner»; voici trois exemples: «Nous exerçons notre hégémonie sur nos alliés», τοὺς ξυμμάχους ... ἐξηγούμεθα (THUCYDIDE, VI, 85,2); «vous gouvernez les villes du Péloponnèse», τὰς ... πόλεις (ID., I, 76,1; voir aussi I, 71,7: τὴν Πελοπόννησον ... ἐξηγεῖσθαι). Pris en ce sens, le verbe ne décrit plus un déplacement local, ce qui est le cas quand on dit: «conduire quelqu'un». Mais pour dire cela en grec, il faut utiliser d'autres verbes, p. ex. ἄγω τινα; voir plus loin p. 354 et n. 42.

«être le guide de», «aller en tête de»): «Qu'il soit le chef des siens», τῶν ἐξηγεῖσθω<sup>(17)</sup>, «trois hommes étaient à la tête de l'expédition», ἐξηγοῦντο δὲ τῆς καταδρομῆς<sup>(18)</sup>, soit encore au datif: «C'était lui qui nous servait de guide à tous», αὐτὸς ἡμῖν πᾶσιν ἐξηγούμενος<sup>(19)</sup>. Quant à l'endroit où l'on se rend, il peut être indiqué, soit par un accusatif de lieu: «J'irai en tête, au lieu (où je dois mourir)», χῶρον . . . ἐξηγήσομαι<sup>(20)</sup>, soit plus souvent par εἰς et l'accusatif: «Je prendrai la direction (sans complément!) pour rentrer en Grèce», ἐξηγήσομαι εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα<sup>(21)</sup>. Ceci, à première vue, pourrait sembler présenter quelque intérêt pour la construction du verset de Jn 1,18, où le P. Boismard a proposé de rattacher εἰς τὸν κόλπον au verbe ἐξηγήσατο<sup>(22)</sup>; mais puisque ces mots dépendent de ὁ ὢν et non pas de ἐξηγήσατο, cette lecture est indéfendable.

b) Lorsque le verbe est employé au sens dérivé de «exposer», «raconter», «expliquer», «interpréter», il est régulièrement accompagné d'un régime direct à l'accusatif, aussi bien dans les écrits juifs que dans les textes hellénistiques. A. Schlatter, cité par R. Robert (p. 435), renvoie à Fl. Josèphe, où ἐξηγεῖσθαι est un «terme technique pour l'interprétation de la Loi, telle qu'on la pratiquait dans le rabbinat»; et il cite deux exemples de la *Guerre des Juifs*: ἐξηγοῦμενοι τοὺς νόμους (I, 649), ἐξηγεῖσθαι τὰ νόμιμα (II, 162; voir déjà Lv 14,57 LXX). Dans le monde grec, les «exégètes» de métier qui, dans les sanctuaires, devaient «expliquer les coutumes des ancêtres» étaient appelés οἱ ἐξηγούμενοι τὰ πάτρια<sup>(23)</sup>. Notons que le complément peut parfois désigner une personne: «ceux qui commentent le poète», ἐξηγούμενοι τὸν ποιητήν<sup>(24)</sup>, «celui qui interprète Héraclite», ὁ τὸν Ἡράκλειτον . . . ἐξηγούμενος<sup>(25)</sup>. En réalité, le complément ne

(17) *Iliade*, 2,806.

(18) FL. JOSÈPHE, *Guerre des Juifs*, III, 11.

(19) SOPHOCLE, *Œdipe à Colone*, 1589.

(20) *Ibid.*, 1520.

(21) XÉNOPHON, *Anabase*, VI, 6,34.

(22) Cf. la construction que proposait le P. Boismard en 1952 (voir n. 8): εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς indiquerait le «lieu» où nous a conduits le Christ. Mais nous avons déjà dit combien cette construction est peu fondée.

(23) Voir *La vérité*, I, 217, où nous donnons plusieurs exemples. Chez Luc aussi, qui emploie uniquement le verbe en ce sens, il y a toujours un régime direct.

(24) PLATON, *Cratyle*, 407b.

(25) ANTIPHANE, 113,3, cité dans Liddell-Scott.

désigne pas l'homme lui-même, mais son œuvre: il est un «auteur» dont on «explique» les écrits ou les paroles (un poème, une loi, une œuvre philosophique).

Ces deux derniers exemples semblent à première vue fournir un point d'appui pour l'interprétation courante de Jn 1,18, par exemple celle du P. Festugière<sup>(26)</sup>: «Narrer, exposer *Dieu*». Avec beaucoup d'autres il suppose que ἐξηγήσατο a comme complément αὐτόν, qui reprend θεόν, mais qu'il y a ellipse de αὐτόν. Cependant, on vient de le voir, le sens ne devrait pas être alors: «raconter Dieu» ou «le Fils de Dieu a 'raconté en détail' (ἐξ-ηγῆσατο) le Père» (Robert), ou encore: «il l'a narré, exposé, décrit» (Festugière), mais plutôt: «il interpréta (ou commenta) (la pensée de) Dieu», comme dans les textes d'Antiphane et de Platon. Mais cela est exclu: Dieu n'est pas un «auteur» dont nous connaissons déjà plus ou moins la pensée et que le Christ vient «interpréter» (il ne s'agit évidemment pas de l'interprétation des paroles de Jésus lui-même, puisqu'il est le sujet du verbe, non l'objet); Dieu n'est pas un philosophe dont il «expose» le système. Faudrait-il dire que le Christ «connaît» le Père (cf. Jn 8,55), et qu'il en apporte l'«exégèse», comme on le dit parfois? C'est une conception étrange, de faire de Jésus l'«exégète» du Père (A. Feuillet). C'est trop d'honneur pour les exégètes, et trop peu pour le Christ; il est le Révéléateur du Père, et non pas un professeur! Jésus n'est pas non plus un docteur de la Loi, qui vient «expliquer la Loi», comme remarque fort justement A. Schlatter: Jésus ne tire pas son enseignement de la Loi ou de l'Écriture, mais de son union avec le Père. Précisons encore ce que nous avons déjà dit: on n'«expose» pas Dieu, comme on expose un système philosophique; on n'«interprète» et on ne «commente» pas Dieu, comme on le fait pour la Loi ou pour une œuvre littéraire; on ne peut pas «narrer» ou «raconter» Dieu, comme on raconte une belle histoire.

D'ailleurs le présupposé grammatical de toute cette exégèse de Jn 1,18, à savoir l'ellipse de αὐτόν, serait insolite chez Jean, comme le reconnaît Robert: «On ne trouve nulle part chez Jean une structure elliptique comparable à celle de 1,18»<sup>(27)</sup>. Il nous faudra donc, dans un deuxième paragraphe, nous orienter tout autrement, c'est-à-dire rechercher soigneusement les cas où l'on trouve l'emploi abso-

<sup>(26)</sup> A. J. FESTUGIÈRE, *Observations stylistiques sur l'Évangile de Jean* (Paris 1974) 133: «Le Fils l'a narré, exposé, décrit».

<sup>(27)</sup> ROBERT, «La double intention», 437.

lu de ἐξηγέομαι (puisque c'est ainsi que Jean utilise le verbe en 1,18), et cela, pour les deux sens que les lexicographes reconnaissent au verbe.

c) Mais il nous faut d'abord encore dire un mot d'un troisième sens possible du verbe, celui de «dévoiler», «révéler», qui n'est pas signalé dans la plupart des dictionnaires (sauf dans celui de Kittel), mais que plusieurs auteurs persistent à découvrir en Jn 1,18, et que Robert cependant récuse: trouver dans ἐξηγηῖσθαι l'idée de *révélation*, dit-il, c'est lui donner «une signification que l'on ne rencontre ni dans la Bible ni dans les textes profanes» (p. 436); et il cite une phrase du P. Festugière, pour remarquer que ce verbe ne signifie jamais «révéler, au sens où dans Jean, le Fils donnerait une révélation»<sup>(28)</sup>. L'affirmation nous paraît trop absolue. Dans la tradition sapientielle des LXX, ἐξηγέομαι (Jb 12,8; 28,27) et son composé ἐκδιηγέομαι (Sir 42,15; 43,31) prennent parfois la nuance de «révéler», «manifeste». Nous nous permettons, pour l'établir, de renvoyer à l'analyse que nous avons faite naguère de ces passages et d'autres semblables<sup>(29)</sup>. Qu'il suffise de citer ici le texte principal, Jb 28,27, qui vient à la fin d'un développement (28,20-28) sur la sagesse, «que seul Dieu connaît et dont seul Il peut révéler le secret» (Crampon, 1939); voici le verset: «Alors il (Dieu) la vit et la *manifesta* (εἶδεν αὐτήν καὶ ἐξηγήσατο αὐτήν); après l'avoir établie, il en *scruta les secrets* (ἐξιχνίασεν), puis il dit à l'homme...». Quand on se rappelle par ailleurs les contacts multiples du prologue de Jean avec la tradition sapientielle, on doit être prudent pour écarter toute nuance de révélation de ἐξηγήσατο en Jn 1,18. Rappelons aussi que cette nuance semble être présente dans les citations et commentaires de plusieurs Pères grecs (Irénée, Chrysostome, Théophylacte, Euthymius)<sup>(30)</sup>.

Néanmoins, nous le reconnaissons, puisque ἐξηγέομαι et ἐκδιηγέομαι, dans les textes sapientiaux que nous avons cités, sont régulièrement accompagnés d'un complément direct<sup>(31)</sup>, ce qui n'est pas

(28) ROBERT, «La double intention», 436, n. 8.

(29) Cf. *La vérité*, I, 220-226.

(30) Voir les notes 2 et 11.

(31) Ainsi en Jb 28,27 et Sir 42,15; en Jb 12, 8 et Sir 43,31, il n'y a pas de mention explicite du complément, mais il s'agit plutôt d'une ellipse, comme c'est souvent le cas quand le verbe signifie avant tout «raconter», «exprimer».



le cas pour ἐξηγήσατο en Jn 1,18, nous avons maintenant à chercher d'autres emplois du verbe, où l'on trouve exactement la construction précise qu'utilise l'évangéliste dans le verset final du prologue. Ceci nous oriente dans une nouvelle direction.

## 2. L'emploi absolu de ἐξηγέομαι

On a parfois envisagé cette possibilité, en parlant de l'hypothèse de l'emploi absolu. Mais est-ce une simple hypothèse? Peut-être, au départ. Mais plus on l'étudie, plus on se convainc que c'est la bonne interprétation. Nous montrerons plus loin que les difficultés exégétiques qu'on lui oppose ne sont pas fondées. Mais il nous faut d'abord examiner les possibilités lexicographiques d'un tel emploi en grec.

A première vue, ἐξηγέομαι semble pouvoir être utilisé sans complément dans les *deux* sens du verbe; mais ce n'est qu'une apparence. En réalité, cet emploi n'est possible que lorsque le verbe signifie «aller en tête».

a) Quand ἐξηγέομαι est utilisé au sens dérivé de «déclarer», «expliquer», on le trouve pourtant, c'est un fait, *sans complément*; mais en réalité, il s'agit alors toujours d'une *ellipse* (le régime direct indiquant une chose est sous-entendu): «A quoi faut-il qu'on s'applique...? Peux-tu [me l']expliquer?», ἔχεις ἐξηγήσασθαι<sup>(32)</sup>; «Conformément à [ce] que prescrivait les devins» (en *interprétant les présages* ou les oracles), ὡς οἱ μάντις ἐξηγοῦντο<sup>(33)</sup>; «là où le devin [l']a prescrit», ἐνθ' ὁ μάντις ἐξηγήσατο<sup>(34)</sup>. En outre, nous ne

(32) PLATON, *Alcibiade*, 124b.

(33) THUCYDIDE, VII, 50,4.

(34) On trouvera de nombreux autres exemples dans *La vérité*, I, 217-218. Ils font bien voir que l'emploi «absolu» du verbe, du type ὁ μάντις ἐξηγήσατο, est en réalité une ellipse. ROBERT lui aussi observe: «Cette ellipse familière se rencontre chez les classiques»; cf. «La double intention», 437, n. 10. Par contre la remarque de SPICQ, *Notes de lexicographie*, I, 256, n. 5, est moins exacte: «L'emploi absolu de *exegeisthai* est normal: 'Ce qu'était ce pouvoir de bien penser, l'auteur va [l']expliquer (ἐξηγήσεται)' (PHILON, *Lois allég.*, III, 21)». En réalité, dans ce texte de Philon, il ne s'agit pas d'un «emploi absolu», ni même d'une ellipse: τί οὖν ἦν τὸ φρονεῖν ἐξηγήσεται; ce premier membre de phrase est une interrogation indirecte qui sert de complément à ἐξηγήσεται. C'est d'ailleurs ce que suggère la traduction du P. Spicq lui-même, puisqu'il a placé entre crochets le complément du verbe «expliquer»: «l'auteur va [l']expliquer». Ce n'est pas une ellipse.

connaissions aucun exemple classique, hellénistique ou patristique, d'un tel emploi elliptique de ἐξηγέομαι (τινα), au sens de «narrer, exposer *quelqu'un*» (une personne), aucun non plus où le complément direct (supposé et sous-entendu) serait *Dieu* (l'explicitation de cette ellipse serait alors: ἐξηγέομαι τὸν θεόν). C'est néanmoins ce que l'on admet encore toujours, sans aucune preuve, dans l'exégèse courante de Jn 1,18. Une structure elliptique de ἐξηγέομαι (= expliquer), certes, est tout à fait classique; mais, répétons-le, le complément implicite du verbe est alors une *chose* (ἐξ. τι), par exemple une parole, un oracle, un écrit, la Loi, mais jamais une personne et encore moins Dieu lui-même.

Ces cas d'ellipse ne nous intéressent donc pas pour notre analyse du mot final du prologue, puisque «déclarer *ou* narrer (*Dieu*)», qu'on veut y lire, est absolument sans parallèles et qu'il s'agit, dans Jn 1,18, non pas d'une ellipse, comme le supposent de nombreux traducteurs («il l'a raconté», «il l'a exposé» «il l'a fait connaître», «il l'a révélé», etc.), mais d'un véritable *emploi absolu* du verbe, c'est-à-dire sans complément d'objet. C'est ce qui faisait dire excellemment à F. Büchsel: «L'absence de complément interdit de comprendre ἐξηγήσατο au sens de 'expliquer'»<sup>(35)</sup>. S'il en est ainsi, ceci nous contraint à nous demander si, pour sortir de l'impasse — car c'en est une! — il ne faut pas prendre en considération l'autre sens de ἐξηγέομαι, d'autant plus que c'est son sens premier, et que précisément, *seul*, il tolère un tel *emploi absolu* du verbe. Il est surprenant que, dans le passé, on n'y ait pratiquement jamais songé! C'est ici que la suggestion de Robert va prendre tout son intérêt; mais elle doit être précisée.

b) Car on rencontre en grec, à différentes époques, plusieurs cas d'emploi absolu de ἐξηγέομαι, entendu suivant son sens premier: «être le chef, exercer la fonction de guide, marcher en tête». C'est pourquoi il est alors régulièrement accompagné du verbe complémentaire «suivre», ἔπεσθαι, qui, lui aussi, reste bien des fois sans complément, comme ἐξηγεῖσθαι, dont il indique l'attitude correspondante: l'un «marche en tête», les autres «suivent». Mais pour la commodité du style, malheureusement, les traducteurs se croient

<sup>(35)</sup> BÜCHSEL, art. ἐξηγέομαι, *TWNT II*, 910, 38-39: «Aber die Objektlosigkeit von ἐξηγέομαι gestattet nicht, es als 'erklären' zu verstehen». Lui-même, comme nous l'avons déjà dit, propose comme traduction «offenbaren», mais à partir de l'usage grec commun, ce qui fait grande difficulté.

souvent obligés de rendre ici ἐξηγέομαι par le verbe transitif «conduire», qui demande normalement l'adjonction d'un complément. Mais ainsi se perd toute la prégnance de l'emploi absolu du verbe en grec.

Voici d'abord trois exemples significatifs de textes non chrétiens: «Les Nymphes suivaient (ἔποντο), et il *allait en tête*», ὁ δὲ ἐξηγεῖτο<sup>(36)</sup>; «suivre (ἔπεσθαι) les Ioniens, partout où ils *s'engageraient*» (mieux que «où ils *les* engageraient» de la traduction Budé), τῇ ὧν οὐτοὶ ἐξηγέωνται<sup>(37)</sup>; donnons aussi un exemple de l'époque du NT: «Ensuite, *marchant en tête* (...), ils s'avancèrent au devant des soldats», ἐξηγούμενοι... τοῖς στρατιώταις ὑπὲντων<sup>(38)</sup>.

Mais citons maintenant un texte particulièrement intéressant du *Discours catéchétique* de saint Grégoire de Nysse. Dans un passage où il décrit les effets du baptême, il écrit: «Il faut suivre (...) celui (le Christ) qui ouvre la voie vers notre salut», τῷ πρὸς τὴν σωτηρίαν ἡμῶν ἐξηγουμένῳ... ἔπεσθαι<sup>(39)</sup>. Quelques lignes auparavant (35,1), il avait employé deux tournures semblables, dont la seconde est empruntée à He 2,10, et qui éclairent singulièrement le passage cité: «Celui qui *a montré le chemin* vers notre vie», «celui qui est le guide vers le salut». Mettons les trois textes en synopse:

(1)	(2)	(3)
ὁ τῆς ζωῆς ἡμῶν καθηγησάμενος	τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς σωτηρίας	τῷ πρὸς τὴν σωτηρίαν ἡμῶν ἐξηγουμένῳ

L'équivalence est frappante, surtout entre la deuxième et la troisième formule: «celui qui est le guide vers le salut» (2), c'est le Christ, «qui ouvre la voie vers notre salut» (3).

<sup>(36)</sup> *Hymne homérique à Dionysos*, II, 9-10.

<sup>(37)</sup> HÉRODOTE, I, 151,2; cf. encore VI, 74; IX, 11,3; 66,2.

<sup>(38)</sup> FL. JOSÈPHE, *Guerre des Juifs*, II, 325.

<sup>(39)</sup> *Or. catech.*, 35,2: PG 45, 88 A-B. On peut consulter la version française de L. MÉRIDIER, *Grégoire de Nysse. Discours catéchétique* (Paris 1908) 160; voici comment il traduit le passage cité: «suivre (...) le guide qui nous conduit à notre salut». Mais pour respecter l'emploi absolu de ἐξηγουμένῳ, nous avons nous-même préféré recourir à une autre traduction: «qui ouvre la voie». Cette traduction ne souligne plus le *déplacement* qu'implique le fait de «conduire», et met plutôt en relief la *position* et le rôle du «guide».

Revenons maintenant au verset final du prologue. Indéniablement, la formule de Jean est étonnamment semblable à celles que nous venons de citer. Comparons-la surtout aux deux premières:

- |                     |                            |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| - ὁ δὲ ἐξηγεῖτο     | ( <i>Hymne homérique</i> ) |
| - οὗτοι ἐξηγέωνται  | (Hérodote)                 |
| - ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο | (Jean).                    |

Dans les trois cas, nous avons un emploi absolu et intransitif du verbe. Du point de vue strictement lexicographique, en nous laissant guider par ces deux textes classiques, nous sommes invités à traduire la formule finale du prologue: «C'est lui qui *a ouvert la voie*», «c'est lui qui *a été le guide*».

Mais il est non moins éclairant de comparer le texte de l'évangéliste avec celui de Grégoire de Nysse. Immédiatement, quelques différences apparaissent. Dans son *Discours catéchétique*, Grégoire indique par trois fois le *terme* de la voie où nous conduit le Christ: le salut, la vie. Il n'en est pas ainsi dans le verset du prologue<sup>(40)</sup>, où l'emploi de ἐξηγήσατο est absolu, dans le sens le plus rigoureux du terme. Sous cet aspect exclusivement philologique, la formule de Jean, d'un grec excellent, est plus directement semblable à celle de l'hymne homérique, où l'accent tombait sur la personne de Dionysos. Qu'est-ce à dire? Si le point de vue de Grégoire est directement parénétique et sotériologique (dans cette catéchèse sur le baptême, il indique aux chrétiens la voie du salut), celui de Jean est strictement christologique, comme le souligne aussi l'emploi emphatique du pronom ἐκεῖνος. L'attention se concentre donc ici sur la personne et sur l'œuvre historique accomplie par lui, le Christ (ἐξηγήσατο est un aoriste!). Le rappel de son œuvre («ouvrir la voie», «montrer le chemin»), soulève évidemment des questions: où conduit ce chemin? Comment l'a-t-il indiqué? Si le texte parle du «sein du Père», ce n'est certainement pas pour insinuer que les hommes y sont conduits: c'est uniquement lui, le Fils unique, qui «est de retour dans le sein du Père». La réponse aux demandes que nous venons de poser ne relève plus de la lexicographie, mais de l'exégèse. Nous tâcherons d'apporter cette réponse dans la deuxième partie de notre

<sup>(40)</sup> Rappelons que εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς n'est pas à rattacher au verbe principal ἐξηγήσατο, mais au participe substantivé ὁ ὢν, qui désigne le Christ.

étude. Mais nous devons d'abord encore traiter d'un autre problème, qui est lui aussi d'ordre lexicographique et sémantique.

### 3. *Un double sens de ἐξηγήσατο?*

C'est la solution que présente R. Robert. Peut-on dire, comme il pense, que «le mot final du prologue johannique» contient une «double intention»? L'idée est nouvelle. L'auteur fait remarquer: «Une telle intention entrerait bien dans la manière de Jean mise en lumière par O. Cullmann» (p. 438). La question est donc de savoir si ἐξηγήσατο peut avoir ici une *double* signification: dans ce cas nous aurions «un jeu de sens entre 'raconter' et 'guider'» (ibid.). Ἐξηγεῖσθαι, sans complément aucun, serait un «mot à double entente» (ibid.). Ce serait même le seul mot possible pour réaliser un tel «jeu de sens».

A première vue, cette suggestion est attrayante. Mais à bien y réfléchir, nous croyons qu'elle peut difficilement se défendre, et cela pour plusieurs raisons.

C'est tout d'abord que la première signification postulée par l'auteur, «raconter», «expliquer», n'est pas possible ici. Si on se réfère à l'analyse lexicographique qui précède, on constate que le verbe ἐξηγέομαι, quand il est entendu au sens de «raconter», «exposer», n'a jamais (à notre connaissance) un complément direct désignant une personne (c'est-à-dire ἐξηγέομαι *τινα*). «Raconter Dieu» serait une formule sans parallèles; elle serait du reste très étrange.

Deuxièmement, l'autre sens que l'on propose de découvrir dans ἐξηγήσατο serait: «C'est lui qui *nous* conduisit». Cependant l'adjonction d'un génitif ou d'un accusatif de *personne* aurait été évitée pour ne pas bloquer la signification dans cette seule direction. Mais supposer qu'il y a ici effectivement une deuxième direction, n'est-ce pas déjà une pétition de principe? D'ailleurs, ici encore, cet autre sens supposé se heurte à une sérieuse difficulté lexicographique. Le verbe «conduire», dans toutes les langues, demande normalement un complément direct (c'est pourquoi l'auteur lui-même commente ici: «... qui *nous* conduisit»). Mais comme nous l'avons montré dans les pages précédentes, ἐξηγέομαι ne signifie jamais «conduire *quelqu'un*». Sans doute, ce verbe, qui est composé du préverbe ἐξ- et d'une forme verbale au moyen, peut parfois, en son sens premier, être accompagné d'un complément direct de personne placé à l'accusatif (ἐξηγέομαι *τινα*); mais précisément il ne signifie pas alors

«conduire quelqu'un» (ce qui impliquerait un déplacement d'un lieu dans un autre), mais «exercer le pouvoir sur quelqu'un, gouverner»<sup>(41)</sup>. Pour dire «conduire quelqu'un», on utiliserait soit le verbe simple ἄγω (τινα), soit à la rigueur ἡγέομαι (τινα)<sup>(42)</sup>, mais non pas ἐξηγέομαι (τινα), qui a un autre sens (ce n'est pas «conduire quelqu'un hors de», malgré la préposition ἐξ-).

Troisièmement, en traduisant «qui (nous) conduisit», on suppose malgré tout l'ellipse du complément direct; cependant, rappelons qu'«on ne trouve nulle part chez Jean une structure elliptique comparable à celle de 1,18» (p. 437). Mais alors? Pourquoi supposer malgré tout qu'elle se trouve dans cette finale du prologue? Il faut exclure ici les deux formes d'ellipse qu'on suppose: ἐξηγήσατο (αὐτόν), au sens de «il raconta Dieu» (premier sens proposé par l'auteur), mais aussi ἐξηγήσατο (ἡμᾶς), au sens de «il nous conduisit» (deuxième sens postulé). L'absence des deux compléments, certes, «ne relève pas du jeu de mots gratuit» (p. 441); mais on ne doit pas non plus parler de «l'ambiguïté finale du prologue», comme si l'évangéliste, dans sa subtilité, avait voulu laisser à notre sagacité d'y découvrir à la fois «deux idées forces de l'évangile». L'explication est beaucoup plus simple: s'il emploie vraiment ici ἐξηγήσατο sans aucun complément, c'est-à-dire en un sens *absolu* et *intransitif*, il ne fait que reprendre un usage qui est bien attesté en grec (ce qu'on semble ignorer). Mais cela requiert en même temps qu'on interprète autrement ce mot ἐξηγήσατο, qui se trouve emphatiquement isolé en finale: non pas par «raconta» ou/et «conduisit» (deux verbes transitifs, qui demandent tous deux un complément!), mais plus communément, suivant les parallèles de l'emploi absolu du verbe dans la tradition grecque: «Il a ouvert la voie, il a été le guide». Il reviendra à l'exégèse de nous dire en quel sens.

Quatrièmement, l'argument que propose l'auteur au début de son article, s'il est suggestif dans sa subtilité, n'est pourtant pas convaincant. Pour expliquer le «jeu de sens» supposé en Jn 1,18, il s'appuie sur le fait que les deux significations bien connues de ἐξηγέομαι («conduire» et «expliquer») resteront longtemps *en concurrence*, ce qui autoriserait parfois «un jeu entre le concret et l'abs-

<sup>(41)</sup> Voir la note 16.

<sup>(42)</sup> Cf. par exemple DÉMOSTHÈNE: «Il conduisait les processions», τὰς πομπὰς ἡγεῖτο. *Contre Midias*, 174 [571,31]).

trait». Pour illustrer son point de vue, il donne comme exemple un texte de Platon, *Rép.*, IV, 427c. Mais laissons-lui la parole:

D'après Platon, l'Apollon de Delphes, «interprète traditionnel» de la religion (πάτριος ἐξηγητής), «installé au centre et au nombril de la terre, donne à tous les hommes ses instructions» (πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις [...] ἐξηγεῖται). Comme le datif de la personne est possible dans les deux acceptions et que le verbe est ici employé absolument, le *jeu de sens* est probable, ce qui a conduit le traducteur de la collection des «Belles Lettres» à proposer cette version: «ce dieu, interprète traditionnel de la religion, s'est établi au centre et au nombril de la terre pour *guider le genre humain*» (p. 435; les italiques sont de nous).

Le rapprochement entre «interprète» (ἐξηγητής) et «guider» (traduction libre de la collection Budé pour ἐξηγεῖται) semblerait donc prouver le «jeu de sens» entre les deux acceptions du verbe. La remarque peut paraître judicieuse, même subtile, mais elle couvre une équivoque. Nous dirions plutôt que, s'il y a ici un «jeu de sens», il est simplement dû au contexte géographique de toute la scène (il faut être attentif à l'abondance des «codes géographiques» dans ce passage): Apollon, «le dieu de Delphes», est la gloire des Grecs, «fondateurs d'un état (πόλιν)»; s'ils veulent être sages, ils ne suivront «pas d'autre interprète que celui du pays (τῷ πατρίῳ)»; ce dieu, qui est installé «au centre et au nombril de la terre», «donne des instructions à tous les hommes»; c'est pourquoi ils viennent de partout consulter l'oracle de Delphes, attirés par ces «interprétations de la religion». Mais cela ne veut pas dire que le verbe ἐξηγεομαι signifie ici «guider» tous les hommes vers le sanctuaire. Comme nous l'avons déjà fait remarquer en 1977 à propos de ce texte (avec l'appui de différents spécialistes): «Ἐξηγεῖσθαι signifie ici: édicter des lois, ordonner, prescrire»<sup>(43)</sup>, et non pas «conduire». Le mouvement de «tous les hommes» vers Delphes est une simple *conséquence* de l'ἐξηγεῖσθαι de l'oracle en ce lieu, non le sens immédiat du verbe lui-même.

Une cinquième et dernière remarque reste à faire au sujet de la «double signification» supposée ici et que l'on trouve de fait plus d'une fois dans S. Jean. Les cas analysés par Cullmann sont dans toutes les mémoires<sup>(44)</sup>. Peut-on en trouver un nouvel exemple dans

<sup>(43)</sup> *La vérité*, I, 216.

<sup>(44)</sup> Dans l'article célèbre de O. CULLMANN cité par Robert (p. 438, n. 12):

l'emploi johannique de ἐξηγεῖσθαι en Jn 1,18? Robert laisse entendre qu'il serait semblable à celui, bien connu, de ὑψωθῆναι: rappelons que, d'après Cullmann, ce verbe s'applique aussi bien au serpent *dressé* dans le désert, qu'au Christ *élevé* sur la croix et à sa glorification au ciel. Mais le parallèle ne vaut pas, parce que, dans les cas étudiés par Cullmann, il ne s'agit pas de deux sens différents d'un même mot, mais de deux (ou plusieurs) applications d'un même sens du même verbe (construit les deux fois de la même manière) à des réalités différentes, qui prennent alors facilement entre elles un rapport de typologie ou de symbole: ὑψοῦν, c'est toujours «élever» (suivi deux fois d'un complément indiqué à l'accusatif), appliqué d'abord au serpent d'airain, puis au Christ en croix (que le serpent préfigure). Remarquons que, dans l'hypothèse d'un tel usage pour ἐξηγήσατο en Jn 1,18, les deux sens supposés ne seraient possibles qu'avec l'emploi elliptique de deux constructions grammaticales différentes (ce qui n'est pas le cas ailleurs): «raconter Dieu» (complément direct) et «guider vers Dieu» (accusatif de direction); il y aurait en outre deux compléments directs différents: d'une part, «raconter Dieu», et de l'autre, «nous conduire». Cela impliquerait le blocage de deux sens différents et de deux constructions différentes dans un mot. C'est trop! Ces deux tournures grammaticales différentes, à supposer qu'elles puissent exprimer toutes deux le sens de ἐξηγήομαι (ce qui est très douteux), ne sont en tout cas pas possibles en même temps. Le double sens d'un mot, dans S. Jean, s'explique par le fait que deux réalités différentes peuvent être indiquées par le même mot, parce qu'elles ont une structure interne semblable et une fonction significative analogue, tout en se situant à des plans différents, dans l'ordre symbolique; mais il ne peut être basé sur une équivoque (inconsciente ou voulue) d'ordre grammatical. Or celle-ci est supposée quand on parle de «l'ambiguïté finale du prologue».

Néanmoins, malgré nos réserves, quelque chose est à garder de l'idée de trouver un «double sens» dans Jn 1,18. Si pratiquement tout le monde, pour commenter le mot final du prologue, emploie des termes tels que «expliquer», «exposer» ou encore «révéler», «faire connaître», il doit y avoir du vrai dans cette tendance universelle. Mais ce second aspect (outre celui de «ouvrir la voie»), di-

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«Der Johanneische Gebrauch doppeldeutiger Ausdrücke als Schlüssel zum Verständnis des 4. Evangeliums», *TZ* 4 (1948) 360-372.



rions-nous, vient tout simplement du contexte et non pas du verbe ἐξηγέομαι lui-même. De ce point de vue, le cas est semblable à celui du texte de Platon (*Rép.*, IV, 427c) expliqué il y a un instant. C'est dire qu'après l'étude lexicographique du verbe, il nous faudra entreprendre l'étude de tout le contexte de Jn 1,18 et de ses parallèles, pour découvrir ces résonances nouvelles du verset. C'est ce que nous ferons un peu plus loin.

#### 4. Conclusion

Le principe que nous avons voulu suivre rigoureusement dans toute cette enquête a été le respect intégral de la construction de ἐξηγήσατο en Jn 1,18: l'emploi *absolu* du verbe, sans détermination d'aucune sorte. Vouloir à tout prix ajouter un complément direct (expliquer «Dieu» ou «nous» conduire), parce qu'on le suppose présent dans une structure elliptique, c'est courir l'aventure. Dire qu'un «premier indice d'un sens équivoque» est précisément «l'absence d'anaphorique» (p. 438), c'est au fond supposer ce que l'on doit démontrer, et se dispenser d'analyser ce que signifie un tel emploi en grec. Si le verbe n'a pas de complément, pourquoi y suppléer, puisque l'analyse philologique a montré que l'emploi absolu de ἐξηγέομαι dans son sens fondamental («aller en tête») est bien attesté tout au long de la culture grecque, de l'âge épique à l'époque patristique? Comment ne s'en est-on pas avisé plus tôt? La conclusion ferme qui se dégage de toute cette étude lexicographique, c'est que ἐξηγήσατο, employé d'une telle manière, ne peut signifier que: «il a ouvert la voie», «il a été le guide». L'idée, certes, peut se rendre d'autres manières en français; mais il convient d'éviter l'emploi d'un verbe transitif comme «conduire» ou «guider», qui ferait dévier l'attention vers un complément direct qui n'y est pas. L'application à la mission du Christ, comme on va le voir, se fait admirablement.

On doit donc certainement savoir gré à R. Robert d'avoir osé proposer de revenir au sens premier de ἐξηγέομαι. Il dit excellemment au début de son article: «L'embarras des commentateurs et leurs divergences laissent penser que ce verset pose des problèmes plus compliqués qu'il ne semble au premier abord» (p. 436). Dans le cas qui nous occupe, on peut regretter que l'auteur ait plus ou moins voulu, d'une part, introduire comme sens fondamental de ἐξηγέομαι l'idée de «conduire» (transitif), et d'autre part qu'il n'ait pas pensé

pouvoir abandonner le sens courant de «raconter» ou «exposer» (transitif lui aussi). D'où la théorie du double sens. Pour différentes raisons, elle nous paraît impossible. Mais il faut, croyons-nous, pousser plus hardiment son intuition première. Le sens premier du verbe (d'après le *Thesaurus*, Chantraine et Liddell-Scott) n'est pas «conduire», mais «être le chef», «aller en tête» (sans complément!): cet emploi absolu est bien attesté à toutes les époques. Or, c'est celui que nous avons dans le verset final du prologue. Pourquoi dès lors chercher l'explication ailleurs? C'est d'autant moins indiqué que, pour les autres formules que l'on propose régulièrement, on ne trouve *nulle part* de parallèles; on n'en découvre pas non plus pour l'emploi des deux constructions différentes qui seraient impliquées en même temps, si on admettait ici la théorie du double sens.

Si on en reste donc au sens fondamental de ἐξηγήσατο que nous avons dit et si on l'applique au Christ, il s'agira maintenant d'examiner quelle interprétation en découle pour la finale du prologue et pour l'ensemble de la théologie johannique. Ce sera l'objet de notre deuxième partie.

## II. Étude exégétique

Cette étape de notre travail sera moins laborieuse que la précédente: après l'enquête que nous avons faite à travers tant de textes de la littérature grecque (des hymnes homériques aux écrits des Pères), nous allons maintenant concentrer toute notre attention sur l'évangile de Jean. La conclusion de l'étude lexicographique était que ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο en Jn 1,18 doit signifier: «C'est lui qui a ouvert la voie», ou à la rigueur: «C'est lui qui a montré le chemin», quoique cette seconde traduction soit moins heureuse, car elle ne fait plus suffisamment entendre que c'est dans sa propre action que le Fils unique a ouvert la voie, dans sa propre personne; il ne l'a pas seulement «montrée» aux autres.

Mais pour dégager maintenant toute la portée de ces deux mots extrêmement denses, nous allons entreprendre trois démarches convergentes: d'abord, l'examen de la correspondance entre les deux parties de la phrase finale; puis, l'étude d'un parallèle étonnant en Jn 14,6 (avec son contexte); enfin, l'analyse du fonctionnement de 1,18 dans la structure du prologue.

1. *Correspondances internes dans la phrase de Jn 1,18b*

Si l'emploi absolu du verbe final embarrasse les interprètes, c'est, dit-on, parce qu'il élimine la correspondance avec la proposition initiale (au v. 18a). Mais cette correspondance entre ce qui est dit de l'homme au *début* (οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν) et ce qui est dit du Christ à la *fin* (ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο) n'est pas la seule et pas la plus importante du verset. A l'intérieur de la longue phrase du v. 18b, il y a un contraste ultérieur qui concerne uniquement le Christ lui-même, à savoir entre deux grandes étapes de sa mission. Le cas est tout à fait semblable en 3,13 (surtout dans le texte reçu): οὐδεὶς... ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Mais analysons de plus près ce contraste de 1,18b.

Ἐξηγήσατο est le verbe principal de cette phrase; il est précédé de son sujet ἐκεῖνος, qui a ici une valeur emphatique. Ces deux mots qui terminent le prologue forment tout le second membre de 1,18b, qui est certainement le membre le plus important; mais ils doivent contrebalancer à eux deux les neuf mots du premier membre. Il s'agit de part et d'autre de la même personne, le Fils unique: il est indiqué d'abord par un *nominativus pendens* (μονογενὴς υἱὸς ou θεός), accompagné d'une participiale déterminative en apposition (ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς), sur laquelle tombe également un grand poids théologique; dans le second membre, qui est très bref, μονογενὴς υἱὸς est repris dans le simple pronom ἐκεῖνος; celui-ci, qui est le vrai sujet grammatical de toute la phrase, est suivi, en finale, du verbe principal, où le tout s'achève solennellement, comme sur un point d'orgue: ἐξηγήσατο. Mais il s'ensuit qu'il y a comme un balancement, un parallélisme stylistique et théologique, entre les deux membres, c'est-à-dire entre l'apposition participiale dans le premier et le verbe principal dans le second. Autrement dit, si on accepte l'interprétation de ἐξηγήσατο proposée ci-dessus, on découvre très vite que ἐξηγήσατο est parallèle à εἰς τὸν κόλπον. Voici la structure de toute la phrase:

<i>Premier membre</i>	<i>Second membre</i>
(a) ὁ ὢν	(a') ἐκεῖνος
(b) εἰς τὸν κόλπον	(b') ἐξηγήσατο
(c) τοῦ πατρὸς	(c') [πρὸς τὸν πατέρα]

On le voit: ἐξηγήσατο correspond clairement, non pas à ἑώρακεν du début, mais à εἰς τὸν κόλπον qui précède: il s'agit de deux

«mouvements» dont l'un est en progression sur l'autre. Le jeu des prépositions de lieu (ἐξ, εἰς) suggère même une sorte de dialectique entre un point de départ passé (ἐξ-, dans un verbe à l' *aoriste*) et un point d'arrivée actuel (εἰς τὸν κόλπον, avec un participe *présent*). La préposition εἰς indique donc la direction où le Fils unique s'est engagé naguère, mais surtout la destination qu'il a déjà atteinte: lui-même est maintenant «de retour εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρός» (cf. infra); par conséquent, le cheminement qu'il avait entrepris jadis en ouvrant la route était orienté πρὸς τὸν πατέρα. Cette explicitation est d'autant plus légitime qu'elle anticipe ce que dira clairement le verset 14,6 (dont nous parlerons dans un instant):

14,6	1,18
ὁδός	ἐξηγήσατο
πρὸς τὸν πατέρα	[πρὸς τὸν πατέρα]

Car même lorsque ἐξηγέομαι est employé de manière absolue, comme ici, il peut être accompagné d'une préposition et d'un accusatif qui indiquent la direction du mouvement (ἐξηγέομαι πρὸς, ἐπὶ ou εἰς), comme on a pu le voir dans différents textes cités précédemment<sup>(45)</sup>.

On redécouvre donc quelque chose de l'intuition première du P. Boismard, mais sans faire dire au texte que le Fils *nous* a conduits «dans le sein du Père», ce qui est impossible. C'est ici que prend toute son importance l'étude que R. Robert a publiée en 1985 sur le premier membre de Jn 1,18b, pour lequel il proposait la traduction suivante: «Celui qui *est de retour* dans le sein du Père»<sup>(46)</sup>. Dans son article plus récent (1987), celui que nous analysons et discutons dans ces pages, l'auteur souligne à bon droit que «cette apposition

<sup>(45)</sup> Voir ci-dessus p. 346 (Xénophon) et 351 (Hérodote et Grégoire de Nysse). Pour plus de commodité, reproduisons ici ces trois exemples d'un emploi absolu de ἐξηγέομαι, suivi d'un accusatif de direction (avec une préposition: εἰς, ἐπὶ ou πρὸς):

- «Je prendrai la direction pour rentrer *en Grèce*», ἐξηγήσομαι εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα (XÉNOPHON, *An.*, VI, 6,34);
- «Nous accompagnerons ses soldats, *contre* toute terre où ils s'engageront», ἐπὶ τὴν ἂν ἐκεῖνοι ἐξηγέωνται (HÉRODOTE, IX, 11,3);
- «Celui (le Christ) qui ouvre la voie *vers* notre salut», πρὸς τὴν σωτηρίαν ἡμῶν ἐξηγουμένῳ (GRÉGOIRE DE NYSSE, *Or. cat.*, 35,2).

<sup>(46)</sup> Voir la référence complète à la note 10.

[c'est-à-dire le premier membre: ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς] influence l'interprétation de ἐξηγήσατο» (p. 439). Certes! Mais pour qu'on le comprenne, il faut expliquer brièvement ce qu'il veut dire: à juste titre, il pense avoir montré que la préposition dynamique εἰς, accompagnée du verbe statique *être* (ici: ὁ ὢν), exprime «l'aboutissement du mouvement». En Jn 1,18b, le premier membre ne décrit donc pas simplement le Fils unique qui «est dans le sein du Père» (*in sinu Patris*, comme dit la Vulgate; nous aurions alors ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ τοῦ πατρὸς); il signifie qu'après tout le mouvement de sa venue «d'auprès (παρά) du Père» (1,14) (mouvement de descente), c'est-à-dire après la période de l'Incarnation, le Fils unique, désormais, pour le regard de foi de l'évangéliste, «est de retour dans (εἰς τὸν κόλπον) le sein du Père» (mouvement de remontée).

Si on admet cette interprétation — qui nous paraît convaincante — et si on admet par ailleurs le sens de ἐξηγήσατο auquel nous a fait aboutir notre propre analyse lexicographique, la correspondance entre les deux membres (*b* et *b'*) devient manifeste; de part et d'autre, en effet, l'évangéliste décrit un «mouvement», une «orientation» du Fils unique: en *b*, le fait qu'il est maintenant «de retour dans le sein du Père» (au présent: ὁ ὢν); en *b'* il nous rappelle ce que le Christ a fait dans le passé (au cours de sa «permanence parmi nous», 1,14): «Il a ouvert la voie» (à l'aoriste: ἐξηγήσατο). L'orientation qu'il a donnée jadis est précisée du fait qu'il est maintenant lui-même «de retour dans le sein du Père». Il était donc alors un guide pour «aller vers le Père» (cf. 14,6). Ici, la formulation de Robert est très heureuse: «Par son départ pour le sein du Père, il a montré leur destinée aux fils adoptifs et authentifié sa mission de 'guide' auprès d'eux» (p. 440); mais il poursuit: «Il les 'a conduits' vers le Père en les précédant auprès de lui par sa résurrection et son ascension»; cette fois, on pourrait un peu chicaner l'auteur, parce qu'il utilise de nouveau un verbe transitif («il les a 'conduits'») et surtout parce qu'il indique tout de suite le moyen pour atteindre le terme («par sa résurrection et son ascension»). Mais c'est supposer une réalisation trop rapide de l'eschatologie: si elle vaut pour le Christ, elle ne se réalise pas encore tout à fait pour les chrétiens; on passe ici trop vite au temps d'après Pâques, alors que l'aoriste ἐξηγήσατο garde toute sa valeur temporelle et décrit globalement le passé, la vie terrestre de Jésus; c'est ainsi, et ainsi seulement, que ἐξηγήσατο peut servir d'ouverture au récit évangélique, qui commence aussitôt après (1,19). A prendre au pied de la lettre l'interpré-

tation proposée, on serait porté à croire que l'ἐξηγήσατο de Jésus ne s'est réalisé que «par sa résurrection et par son ascension». Mais on risque ainsi d'enlever toute son importance à la mission historique du Verbe fait chair. Or, c'est pendant toute cette période-là qu'il a «ouvert la voie». En raison de l'emploi absolu du verbe, certes, la manière dont il l'a fait n'est pas indiquée. Mais elle résultera très clairement de l'examen du parallèle de 14,6 et surtout de l'analyse du contexte de tout le prologue. Dès maintenant, en tout cas, il importe de le souligner: si Jésus «a ouvert la voie», ce n'est pas directement «par sa résurrection et son ascension» futures; c'est par toute sa mission terrestre, celle que l'évangéliste va décrire.

## 2. Le texte parallèle de Jn 14,6

Si ἐξηγήσατο signifie que Jésus «a ouvert la voie», il est indispensable d'interroger l'étonnant parallèle du discours après la Cène où Jésus déclare: «*Je suis la Voie, la Vérité et la Vie; personne ne va vers le Père sans passer par moi*» (14,6). Il n'est pas requis de faire ici toute l'exégèse de ce grand texte<sup>(47)</sup>. Quelques remarques essentielles suffiront pour nous aider à mieux comprendre, à partir de là, le mot final du prologue.

Faisons tout d'abord une observation en ce qui concerne le milieu identique, biblique et juif, d'où dérive aussi bien ἐξηγήσατο de Jn 1,18 que ὁδός de 14,6: l'un et l'autre terme se situe dans le prolongement de la réflexion vétéro-testamentaire sur la *loi* comme *chemin*. Suivant une suggestion qui nous a été faite, considérons un instant le texte de Lv 14,54-57 LXX, où sont rapprochés ὁ νόμος et ἐξηγήσασθαι, précisément comme en Jn 1,18. Or, ἐξηγήσασθαι y recouvre le *hifil* du verbe נָתַן (d'où dérive נְתַתּוּ, loi), qui a un double sens: «enseigner», et dès lors aussi «montrer *la route* à suivre» (au sens figuré). Par ce biais, il est possible que ἐξηγήσατο, en Jn 1,18, dans le sens où nous l'avons entendu («il a ouvert la voie»), se rattache en définitive à cet arrière-fond biblique où il est question de la Torah (comme en Jn 1,17). Mais il faut aussitôt mesurer le progrès considérable qui a été accompli dans la réinterprétation du thème en Jn 1,18 et 14,6. Les versets de Lv 14,54-57 sont la conclusion de la section 13,1-14,57, qui expose la législation sur le pur et l'impur,

(47) Cf. à ce sujet *La vérité*, I, 241-278.

dans le cas de la lèpre; voici la finale: «Telle est la loi (ὁ νόμος). . . qui prescrit (τοῦ ἐξηγήσασθαι) quand une chose est impure et quand elle doit être purifiée». En 1,17-18, il n'est plus question de l'interprétation ou des prescriptions de la Loi (cf. supra p. 346: ἐξηγεῖσθαι τοὺς νόμους), mais d'une personne vivante (ἐκεῖνος), qui désormais remplace la Loi: Jésus Christ, le Fils Unique de Dieu. «Il a, *lui*, ouvert la voie», ce qui n'appartient plus à l'ordre légal de l'observance de la Loi; suivre le Christ sur cette voie, c'est adhérer à sa personne dans la foi, pour vivre dans la communion «avec le Père et avec son Fils Jésus-Christ» (1 Jn 1,3). Cette réinterprétation de ἐξηγέομαι a aussi son contrecoup sur le vocabulaire et l'emploi sémantique du verbe: aussi longtemps qu'on comprend ἐξηγήσατο au sens de «il expliqua», comme on le fait souvent, on lui adjoint un complément et on reste au niveau vétéro-testamentaire et juif de l'expression («expliquer *la Loi*»). Mais en Jn 1,18, et ici seulement dans toute la Bible, on trouve *l'emploi absolu* du verbe (suivant un usage bien attesté en grec non biblique). Par le fait même le verbe retrouve son sens primitif («être le guide»), qu'il n'avait jamais dans les LXX. L'idée de «montrer la route», sans doute, était présente dans l'hébreu sous-jacent (הָדַר), en liaison avec la *Loi* qu'on «interprétait»; mais en Jn 1,18, elle change de sens, du fait qu'elle est transférée de la Loi à la personne du Christ: «*C'est lui* qui a ouvert la voie» vers le Père, en se faisant connaître *lui-même* comme le Fils unique. L'idée d'«interpréter» (interpréter *quoi?*) a disparu.

Une remarque analogue doit se faire au sujet de 14,6: il ne décrit plus la voie des commandements, mais le Christ lui-même (ἐγώ), qui, en tant que *Fils unique*, est la *Voie vers le Père*. On mesure ainsi toute la nouveauté chrétienne que Jean nous propose dans ces deux textes, quand on les compare avec leur arrière-fond hébraïque. On doit se rappeler ici le mot célèbre de saint Irénée aux marcionites: «Cognoscite quod (Dominus) omnem novitatem attulit semetipsum afferens» (*Adv. haer.*, IV, 34,1).

Arrêtons-nous maintenant à un autre aspect de Jn 14,6, pour éclairer 1,18; nous voulons parler du parallélisme interne au verset: il fait voir en quel sens Jésus est «la Voie». Cette idée est exprimée sous deux formes différentes dans les deux parties de Jn 14,6: d'abord sous forme d'image («Je suis *la Voie*»), puis au moyen d'une préposition («*par moi*», δι' ἐμοῦ). Mais le deuxième membre précise où conduit ce «Chemin» qu'est le Christ: «vers le Père» (πρὸς τὸν πατέρα). Les deux autres substantifs du v. 6a sont une

explication du premier; si Jésus est «le Chemin» vers le Père, c'est parce qu'il est «la Vérité et la Vie», parce que lui, le Fils incarné, nous apporte en lui-même la révélation du Père et qu'il nous communique la vie filiale qui est une communion à la vie du Père.

Or on trouve également le mot «vérité» en Jn 1,14.17; dès lors, le rapprochement entre les deux passages s'impose. On voudra bien nous permettre de reprendre ici ce que nous écrivions naguère, au terme d'une longue analyse de Jn 14,6: «Il n'est formellement question du Christ-Vérité que dans le contexte immédiat de son Incarnation (Jn 1,14-18; 14,6-11); seule la Parole incarnée, le Fils de Dieu apparu parmi les hommes, est pour saint Jean 'la Vérité' de Dieu. Seul l'homme Jésus est parmi nous la vivante épiphanie du Père; et c'est pourquoi lui seul est pour nous 'le Chemin' vers le Père»<sup>(48)</sup>.

On voit ce qui en découle pour l'interprétation de «il a ouvert la voie» en 1,18. Si, comme le dit Jn 14,6, Jésus est «la Voie» vers le Père, parce qu'il est «la Vérité», la révélation du Père, on a de fortes raisons de penser que c'est dans le même sens que Jésus «a ouvert la voie» (ἐξηγήσατο), d'après 1,18; c'est d'autant plus probable que, par deux fois dans la finale du prologue, on trouve le même mot «vérité»: le Verbe incarné est «le Fils unique, venu d'auprès du Père plein de la grâce de la vérité» (1,14); «la grâce de la vérité nous a été faite par Jésus Christ» (1,17). Si donc il a «ouvert la voie» vers le Père, lui qui est maintenant «de retour dans le sein du Père», c'est parce que lui, «le Fils unique, venu d'auprès du Père», nous a apporté dans sa personne «la grâce de la vérité». C'est par sa mission de révélation que lui, le Fils unique, «venu d'auprès du Père», a ouvert la voie vers le Père. Jésus pourra dire en un sens analogue à la Cène, dans un texte très proche de celui de 14,6: «Qui me voit, voit le Père» (14,9).

### 3. Les corrélations à l'intérieur du prologue

Dans cette dernière étape, il nous reste à examiner la structure du prologue, pour y découvrir quels éléments ont des corrélations avec 1,18 et peuvent permettre d'en percevoir toutes les résonances.

Nous avons déjà attiré l'attention sur le fait que, du point de vue du vocabulaire, le thème de la «voie» et celui de la «vérité»

<sup>(48)</sup> *La vérité*, I, 275; nous supprimons les italiques.



sont présents en 1,14-18, comme ils le sont en 14,6. Mais nous devons maintenant analyser de plus près les corrélations proprement structurelles de ἐξηγήσατο avec d'autres éléments du prologue. Voici la structure de base d'où nous tirons nos observations<sup>(49)</sup>.

A (1-2) (πρός)	A' (6-8)	A'' (15)
B (3-5a)	B' (9)	—
C (5b)	C' (10-12)	C'' (16)
—	D' (13-14)	D'' (17-18) (εἰς)

Deux particularités intéressent les vv. 17-18 et doivent être notées immédiatement: le parallélisme de D'' (17-18) avec D' (13-14), et l'inclusion qui embrasse tout le prologue (les vv. 17-18, reliés aux vv. 1-2).

a) Entre le v. 14 et les vv. 17-18, il y a indéniablement des contacts multiples, comme on peut le voir dans la petite synopse que voici:

D' (v. 14)	D'' (vv. 17-18)
	LA GRÂCE DE LA VÉRITÉ fut faite par J.C.
et nous avons contemplé	Nul n'a jamais vu
sa gloire,	Dieu;
la gloire du FILS UNIQUE,	le FILS UNIQUE,
qui vient d'auprès du	qui est de retour dans le sein du
Père,	Père,
plein de LA GRÂCE DE LA VÉRITÉ.	c'est lui QUI A OUVERT LA VOIE.

On est tout d'abord frappé par le parallélisme antithétique entre «qui vient d'auprès du Père», παρὰ πατρός (mouvement de descente), et «qui est de retour dans le sein du Père», εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρός (mouvement de remontée). C'est exactement le double mouvement que l'on retrouve en Jn 3,13; on peut gloser ici ce texte, en le formulant avec les mots de Jn 1,14.18: «nul ne peut être de retour dans le sein du Père, hormis celui qui est venu d'auprès du Père».

L'interprétation de la formule finale, «c'est lui qui a ouvert la voie», est commandée par ce double rapprochement (dans les trois

<sup>(49)</sup> Pour l'établissement de cette structure, voir notre étude «La structure du prologue de saint Jean», NTS 30 (1984) 353-381.

cas il s'agit d'un «mouvement» ou d'une «orientation» du Verbe fait chair): «le Fils unique... qui a ouvert la voie» (aoriste), c'est celui, certes, qui actuellement «est de retour dans le sein du Père» (présent), mais c'est le même qui, naguère, «est venu habiter parmi nous» (ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν) (aoriste), «plein de la grâce de la vérité». Le mot final «il a ouvert la voie (ἐξηγήσατο)» vers le Père indique l'orientation fondamentale de la mission terrestre de Jésus, telle que l'évangéliste va la raconter.

Mais peut-on voir d'une manière plus précise comment «il a ouvert la voie»? Un double parallélisme avec les mots «la grâce de la vérité» l'indique. Dans les deux derniers versets, on découvre une petite inclusion (verticale dans le schéma, en D''):

- la grâce de la vérité fut faite par J.C.
- c'est lui qui a ouvert la voie.

Pareillement, il y a un parallélisme entre les derniers membres des deux colonnes (sur une ligne horizontale, en D' et D''):

- plein de la grâce de la vérité
- c'est lui qui a ouvert la voie.

Les deux indications sont convergentes, quoique ce soit moins directement apparent. Elles montrent que Jésus a été pour nous le guide «qui a ouvert la voie», en tant qu'il a apporté «la grâce de la vérité» (cf. 14,6!), ou si l'on veut, en tant qu'il a apporté «la vérité», qui était «une grâce du Père»<sup>(50)</sup>, ou encore, en tant qu'il s'est révélé «lui-même (ἐκεῖνος)» comme «le Fils unique... venu d'auprès du Père», et qui «a donné pouvoir de devenir enfants de Dieu à ceux qui croient en son nom» (v. 12). La voie vers le Père que le Christ nous a ouverte, n'est donc pas directement celle qui passe par sa mort et par la nôtre, pour nous permettre d'atteindre le Père dans l'au-delà; c'est la voie de la révélation terrestre de sa propre vie filiale, la voie de notre foi «en son nom», le nom du Fils unique, celui «qui fut engendré de Dieu»<sup>(51)</sup>; c'est la voie qui consiste à «recevoir de sa plénitude» (cf. v. 16), qui n'est rien d'autre qu'une

<sup>(50)</sup> CLÉMENT D'ALEXANDRIE, *Pédagogue*, I, 7,60,2: ἡ δὲ ἀλήθεια, χάρις οὕσα τοῦ πατρὸς (SC 70, 218; PG 8, 321 C).

<sup>(51)</sup> Pour Jn 1,13, nous optons pour la leçon au singulier. Ce n'est pas le moment d'en discuter; cf. notre article «La structure...» (cité n. 49), avec les indications bibliographiques données p. 380, n. 55.

participation à sa divine filiation, par le don de notre filiation adoptive<sup>(52)</sup>.

Mais la structure ouvre un horizon encore beaucoup plus large, quand on rapproche le mot final ἐξηγήσατο du début de tout le prologue.

b) Examinons en effet l'inclusion majeure de l'ensemble du prologue (vv. 1-2 et v. 18). On doit se rappeler à ce propos une remarque judicieuse faite voici près d'un siècle par Harnack: «L'indication la plus importante pour comprendre le prologue, on la trouve dans une comparaison entre le début et la fin»<sup>(53)</sup>.

Dans les deux premiers versets, Jean dit du Verbe qu'il «était tourné vers Dieu» (ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν); mais après tout le mouvement de la «venue» du Verbe (v. 11) et de son Incarnation «parmi nous» (v. 14), il est présenté à la fin comme «étant de retour dans le sein du Père» (ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς): πρὸς τὸν θεόν (vv. 1-2) et εἰς τὸν πόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς (v. 18) sont parallèles. En outre, aux mots πρὸς τὸν θεόν des vv. 1-2 fait écho la formule πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, dont nous avons dit qu'elle est impliquée dans le verbe final ἐξηγήσατο. Cela veut dire que l'«orientation» que Jésus Christ nous a indiquée dans sa vie terrestre trouve pour ainsi dire son modèle, son archétype, dans l'orientation transcendante du Logos vers Dieu. On pourrait même peut-être encore risquer un pas de plus: celui qui, d'après le début du prologue, était «tourné vers Dieu», est appelé ὁ λόγος, ce qu'on peut traduire (en raison de la construction emphatique) «celui qui était la Parole». Mais d'après la finale, celui qui «a ouvert la voie», c'est Jésus Christ, par qui nous a été faite «la grâce de la vérité». Il y a donc une sorte de parallélisme implicite entre ces deux termes johanniques, si lourds de sens théologique: *la Parole* et *la Vérité*. Rapprochement qui n'a rien d'arbitraire, comme le montrent les contacts fréquents des deux thèmes dans l'ensemble du IV<sup>e</sup> évangile<sup>(54)</sup>.

Les diverses connexions des vv. 17-18 avec tout ce qui précède

(52) Pour cette interprétation de Jn 1,16, voir le commentaire de THÉODORE DE MOPSUESTE (CSCO 116, 26), cité dans *La vérité*, I, 208, n. 274.

(53) A. HARNACK, «Über das Verhältnis des Prologs des vierten Evangeliums zum ganzen Werk», *ZTK* 2 (1892) 189-231 (cf. p. 214). Pour illustrer ce qu'il vient de dire, l'auteur transcrit l'un après l'autre les vv. 1-2 et le v. 18.

(54) Voir *La vérité*, I, chap. I: «Parole et vérité» (p. 39-78).

permettent de dire que cette finale, surtout le v. 18, est le point d'aboutissement et de concentration de tout le prologue<sup>(55)</sup>.

### Conclusion

Le point de départ de toute notre analyse a été l'article de R. Robert sur «la double intention du mot final du prologue johannique»<sup>(56)</sup>. Nous avons cru ne pas pouvoir maintenir l'idée d'un «double sens» du mot ἐξηγήσατο. Mais nous avons donné toute sa valeur au sens premier du verbe, qui avait été perdu de vue et que Robert a eu le mérite de réintégrer dans l'exégèse du verset. Dans cette finale du prologue, le Verbe fait chair, le Fils unique, est présenté comme le guide qui nous précède sur le chemin vers le Père. Les autres résonances qui sont certainement présentes dans cette phrase (surtout l'idée de révélation), viennent du développement qui l'accompagne et de la position du v. 18 dans la structure, plutôt que du mot pris en lui-même. Mais ces autres résonances sont importantes, puisqu'elles font comprendre pourquoi et en quel sens Jean peut dire du Fils unique que «c'est lui qui a ouvert la voie».

Le thème du Christ comme «guide» se rencontre encore ailleurs dans le NT. Songeons surtout au titre ἀρχηγός qui lui est appliqué quatre fois (Ac 3,15; 5,31; He 2,10; 12,2), spécialement quand il est suivi d'un génitif qui indique où le Christ conduit: «le chef qui conduit à la vie», τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς ζωῆς (Ac 3,15)<sup>(57)</sup>, «le chef qui a été le guide vers leur salut», τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτῶν (He 2,10). Dans chacun de ces deux textes, comme d'ailleurs chez Grégoire de Nysse qui, pour expliquer que le Christ est ἐξηγούμενος, cite le second<sup>(58)</sup>, ἀρχηγός prend une signification nettement eschatologique. Ce n'est pas le cas dans Jn 1,18. Sans doute Jean rappelle que le Fils unique est (ὢν) «de retour dans le sein du Père», mais

<sup>(55)</sup> Cf. dans le même sens K. HAACKER, *Die Stiftung des Heils. Untersuchungen zur Struktur des johanneischen Theologie* (Stuttgart 1972) 25-36: «Joh 1,17 als Zielpunkt des Prologs und Themaangabe des vierten Evangeliums». Mais ce que l'auteur dit ici pour le v. 17 vaut en réalité pour les deux versets de la fin du prologue (vv. 17-18): ils doivent être pris ensemble.

<sup>(56)</sup> Cf. la fin de la note 1.

<sup>(57)</sup> On peut consulter à ce sujet notre article «'Gesù, il capo che conduce alla vita' (At 3,15)», *PSV* 5 (1982) 107-126.

<sup>(58)</sup> Voir ci-dessus p. 351.

l'aoriste ἐξηγήσατο renvoie à l'activité terrestre de Jésus, c'est-à-dire à un fait passé: il a apporté «la grâce de la vérité» (1,17); en 1,18 comme en 14,6, c'est en tant que révélateur que Jésus lui-même est la Voie vers le Père, et pas immédiatement par son entrée dans la gloire. Ici encore, le parallèle de 14,9 est précieux: «Qui me voit, voit le Père». Jésus «a ouvert la voie» vers le Père en se dévoilant lui-même comme le Fils unique du Père.

Cette lecture de la finale du prologue a son importance pour l'interprétation de tout le IV<sup>e</sup> évangile. Le prologue se présente, en effet, comme une ouverture. Le témoignage de Jean-Baptiste, qui y avait été introduit à deux endroits (vv. 6-8.15), va être décrit en détail aussitôt après, dès le v. 19. D'emblée lui est posée la question de son identité: «Toi, qui es-tu?» (1,19). Et la réponse est nette, en référence au Christ: «Je ne suis pas (ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμι) le Christ» (1,20). On remarquera que c'est le seul endroit du IV<sup>e</sup> évangile où retentit le ἐγὼ εἰμι christologique (cf. le prédicat ὁ Χριστός), mais accompagné ici d'une négation: Jean n'est *pas* la lumière (1,8a), il n'est *pas* le Christ (1,20); mais il vient pour rendre témoignage à la lumière (1,8b), il vient pour manifester le Messie à Israël (1,31). La manifestation du mystère du Christ est peut-être le thème dominant de tout l'évangile; et la dimension la plus profonde de cette révélation sera que l'homme Jésus a Dieu même comme Père. C'est bien en ce sens que le mot final du prologue introduit à l'évangile. Par sa mission terrestre qui va y être racontée, Jésus se fera connaître comme «le Fils unique venu d'auprès du Père» (1,14). Mais au matin de Pâques il dira à Marie de Magdala: «Je monte vers mon Père et votre Père, vers mon Dieu et votre Dieu» (20,17). Lui-même, à la Cène, avait synthétisé en quelques mots les deux étapes essentielles de sa mission: «Je suis sorti d'auprès du Père et venu dans le monde. De nouveau je quitte le monde et je vais vers le Père» (16,28). On comprend que l'évangéliste puisse déjà dire de lui dans la conclusion du prologue qu'il «est de retour dans le sein du Père» (1,18), mais aussi et surtout qu'en jetant un regard rétrospectif sur toute la vie terrestre de Jésus, il termine par ces mots: «C'est lui qui a ouvert la voie (vers le Père)». Il ne pouvait trouver de meilleure formule comme introduction à l'évangile.

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## SUMMARY

The verb ἐξηγήσατο in John 1,18 is still being discussed. For some its meaning is "explain" (Jesus was "the Father's exegete"); for others it means "reveal" ("He revealed him"). R. Robert rightly objected to these two interpretations and suggested seeing a conscious ambiguity in this word: it would mean both "He told about the Father" and "He led men to God". But this solution seems impossible since it gives the verb two different meanings simultaneously and presupposes an ellipsis which is never attested in St. John.

However, Robert has the merit of drawing our attention to the first meaning of the verb. We continue this idea, while giving the full weight to the *absolute use* of ἐξηγήσατο. This construction is attested in all eras and implies precisely this first meaning: "to walk in front". The meaning of v. 18b, therefore, is: "The only Son, who is back in the bosom of the *Father*, he is the one who *has opened the way*" (cf. the parallel at 14,6: he is "the Way" *toward the Father*). At the end of the article we show the importance of this exegesis, both for the understanding of the entire prologue and for the whole of the fourth gospel which it introduces.

## ANIMADVERSIONES

### The Johannine School: A Gnostic Tradition in Primitive Christianity?\*

Recent research has tended to support a clearer and clearer picture of the Johannine Epistles. The School's interior tensions, seen in the Fourth Gospel's farewell discourse, culminated in the splintering apart of Johannism. The dynamics inherent in its theological tradition gave birth to a radical wing of the movement which was Gnostic and Docetic and believed itself to be the tradition's legitimate heir. The three Epistles are three attempts to counter with an "orthodox" interpretation of Johannism and to strengthen or to re-establish the cohesion of the Johannine communities around this center<sup>(1)</sup>.

This interpretation, which goes along with an anti-Docetic and anti-Gnostic understanding of the Epistles, tends to be popularly agreed upon<sup>(2)</sup>. It must, however, be re-examined.

#### I. Historical Background of 2-3 John

The last two Johannine Epistles are the only two typical letters of Hellenistic correspondance which were preserved in the New Testament writings. Written by an anonymous author who refers to himself with the enigmatic title "the Elder", they make up the last documents of what we call the Johannine School. The first of these pursues a double end. After the initial greetings (vv. 1-3) and the wishes (v. 4), which belong to the literary *genre* of

\* Lecture given on May 19, 1987 at the Faculté de Théologie de l'Université de Lausanne. The proposed interpretation is the hypothesis-framework for a commentary on the Johannine Epistles now under preparation for the *Handbuch zum Neuen Testament*.

<sup>(1)</sup> Cf. E. HAENCHEN, "Neuere Literatur zu den Johannesbriefen", *TRu* 26 (1960) 1-43.267-291; K. WENGST, *Häresie und Orthodoxie im Spiegel des ersten Johannesbriefes* (Gütersloh 1976); R. A. CULPEPPER, *The Johannine School: An Evaluation of the Johannine-School Hypothesis Based on an Investigation of the Nature of Ancient Schools* (SBL Dissertations Series 26; Missoula 1975); R. E. BROWN, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple. The Life, Loves, and Hates of an Individual Church in New Testament Times* (New York 1979); J. BOGART, *Orthodox and Heretical Perfectionism* (SBL Dissertations Series 33; Missoula 1977).

<sup>(2)</sup> Recent stage of research: H. THYEN, "Johannesbriefe", *TRE* III, 1/2, 186-200, especially 192-195. The most complete presentation of the hypotheses is found in W. M. L. de WETTE, *Lehrbuch der historischkritischen Einleitung in die Bibel Alten und Neuen Testaments* (Berlin 1869) I, 400-401.

the ancient letter<sup>(3)</sup>, it presents the Elder's request to the addressed church: ἐρωτῶ σε ἵνα ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους. The formulation is typically Johannine; it is only a circumstantial application of the commandment given to the disciples in the Fourth Gospel's farewell discourses and called forth several times in the First Epistle<sup>(4)</sup>. There is nothing surprising for his correspondents in the Elder's use of such language. The entire argumentation with which he backs up his demand is an anthology of Johannine vocabulary. The words are used in a sort of collage which must have sounded like a chain of quotations to his readers. The commandment of love to which he refers is the commandment received from the Father. It is not a new commandment but is rather the commandment which we have always had; and the love which is requested is that we walk according to his commandments. The greetings and the wishes were already filled with unambiguous references. Both the recipient and the sender are on common ground, and the implicit context of communication is, as we can see, one of belonging to a group for which the Gospel and the First Epistle serve as founding documents.

The Elder's reason for his request introduces the letter's second goal (vv. 7-11). If the Elder seems to fear a break in the unity with his addressees, it is because the tempters are threatening him. These tempters are missionaries, as the technical Johannine term used to describe them implies: ἐξῆλθον εἰς τὸν κόσμον<sup>(5)</sup>. Their characteristic trait, according to the Elder, is not to confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This phrase is almost a quotation of the First Epistle. In order to be an exact quote, it is missing a verbal form in the perfect tense which would refer to the story told in the Gospel: to confess Jesus Christ as having come in the flesh (1 John 4,2). The two expressions are parallel, however. The one in Second John is a combination of quotations from the Gospel and the First Epistle, while the First Epistle has shortened a concise formula which makes up the essential part of the Johannine faith: to confess Jesus who came in the flesh as the

(3) The literary form is the apostolic letter. The Hellenistic formula of greeting is replaced by a formula of benediction, and the *formula valetudinis* is replaced by a thanksgiving. Cf. K. BERGER, "Apostelbrief und apostolische Rede / Zum Formular frühchristlicher Briefe", *ZNW* 65 (1974) 190-231. It is a classical construction: the thanksgiving functions as a *captatio benevolentiae*, and the request itself, formally introduced by ἐρωτῶ σε, vv. 5-6, finds its motivation in the argumentation in vv. 7-9 and its clarification in the instructions in vv. 10-11.

(4) The commandment of mutual love (ἀγαπᾶν ἀλλήλους) as an eschatological commandment finds its founding event in the Bringer of Revelation's return to the Father (John 13,34; 15,9-17). Cf. F. VOUGA, *Le cadre historique et l'intention théologique de Jean* (Beauchesne Religion; Paris 1981) 90-95. Ἀγαπᾶν ἀλλήλους is always in the second person plural in the Gospel and, following the change in literary form, is always in the first person plural in the Epistles (1 John 3,11.23; 4,7.11.12). The imperative of mutual love corresponds with the criterion of brotherly love in the casuistical formulations of 1 John (2,10; 3,10; 4,20-21; cf. 5,1-2).

(5) Cf. John 1,9; 3,19; 6,14; 11,27; 12,46; 16,28; 18,37; 1 John 4,1; 2 John 7 cf. 10: (ἐξ)έρχομαι εἰς τὸν κόσμον. On this subject: N. H. CASSEM, "A Grammatical and Contextual Inventory of the Use of 'κόσμος' in the Johannine Corpus", *NTS* 19 (1972) 81-91.



Man from Heaven<sup>(6)</sup>. As we will see, the fact that the Gospel can already use both the perfect ἐλήλυθα and the present ἐρχόμενος is significant for its understanding of Christianity. For the moment, let us simply note the logic of the argumentation in the Second Epistle. If the missionaries mentioned are tempters, it is because they do not belong to the Johannine tradition of interpretation. The expression again takes advantage of the Johannine School's technical terminology: πᾶς ὁ μὴ μένων/ὁ μένων. The addressees are thus themselves called to be careful: indeed, they are dealing with people who have not remained faithful to the revelation — who, consequently, possess neither the Father nor the Son — and whose evil works one must avoid. The procedure of quoting and putting together stereotypical Johannine formulae is much used until the end of the letter. The author's expression of his desire in the final greetings (vv. 12-13) to meet his addressees and to have a further discussion with them (v. 12b) provides us with no supplementary information: it is only a pure ancient epistolary convention<sup>(7)</sup>.

The Elder, as one can see, does not go on to provide any inventive argumentation. For his ends, he needs only to quote, with an authoritativeness considered as implicitly accepted by his addressees, a string of ready-made formulae taken directly or indirectly from the Gospel or from the First Epistle. In this way, he means to strengthen the unity of their common circle in the face of an intrusion from people of whom we still know nothing, except that they do not know the truth: that is, they do not belong to the Johannine tradition.

In its form, the Third Epistle is put together in a way strangely similar to the Second Epistle. But unlike the Second Epistle, it is a letter of recommendation. The Elder addresses himself to Gaius in order to call the brothers (that is, the members of the Johannine circle who have also left as itinerant missionaries) to his attention. Gaius had already received these men once. Through them, the Elder learned that Gaius was walking in truth (that is, in the Johannine tradition). He asks him now (vv. 6-8 καλῶς ποιήσεις) to give them his support once again; that is, to provide them with food and shelter, as well as with letters of recommendation and the necessary food supplies to continue their voyage. If the Elder addresses this request to

<sup>(6)</sup> For a detailed analysis: J. LIEU, *The Second and Third Epistles of John*, (Edinburgh 1986) 78-87. One must add, however, that the present tense of 2 John 7, like the perfect of 1 John 4,2, both evoke a lasting state. See THYEN, "Johannesbriefe", 193. The simple naming of "Jesus" in 1 John 4,3 shows that "Christ" could be a predicate. See: O. A. PIPER, "1 John and the Didache of the Primitive Church", *JBL* 66 (1947), 437-451, here 445. In each case, the christological confession is commented upon by the locution ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα resp. ἐρχόμενον. The meaning is: it does not suffice to confess the Christian faith, but to confess its Johannine Interpretation. The meaning of ἐν σαρκὶ can best be explained by the interpretation of John 1,14 in John 6,51-58.

<sup>(7)</sup> On this subject, see H. KOSKENNIEMI, *Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie des Griechischen Briefes bis 400 n. Chr.* (Helsinki 1956) 169-172; BERGER, "Apostelbrief", 204-207; J. L. WHITE, "Greek Documentary Tradition", *Semeia* 22 (1981) 89-106, here 95; P. CUGUSI, *Evoluzione e Forme dell'Epistolografia Latina* (Roma 1983) 56-67.

Gaius, it is because he had already written to the church, but a certain Diotrophes, worried about his hegemony, refused to accept the letter and its carriers. He closed the door on his brothers and threatens to exclude from the church those who do welcome them (vv. 9-10). Gaius, then, is asked to do good and not evil, like those who have never seen God. The Elder ends his letter by citing himself as a reference for Demetrius, to whom everyone bears witness and for whom the Elder can hold himself responsible. The formula that he uses (ἡ μαρτυρία ἡμῶν ἀληθής ἐστίν) is almost a direct quotation of John 19,35 and 21,24.

The theological sobriety of the argumentation which we had already noticed in 2 John is here made absolute. The Elder refers back to a truth — the truth in which one must walk (3 John 3.4, cf. 2 John 4) and which distinguishes those who are of God and those who have never seen God (3 John 11). This view of reality is based on the Elder's testimony, which Gaius is supposed to be able to accept as true. The argumentation, even more than in the Second Epistle, boils down to an argument over authority — understood as the recognition of the authority of the Johannine tradition.

The enigma presented by these two letters is found in the contrast of their similarity of form — it is a question of two letters of petition and of recommendation copied from the ancient epistolographical literary *genre*: initial greetings, wishes, request, argumentation supporting the request, instruction or recommendation, then secondary and final greetings, put together almost word for word, in an identical fashion according to the conventional stereotypes — and the divergence of their requests. It is often commonly stated in Johannine exegesis that what the Elder asks for in the Second Epistle is exactly what he complains about in the Third Epistle. It is both times a question of the hospitality given to itinerant missionaries. While he finds it scandalous that the members of the Johannine community are not received in Diotrophes' church, the author of the letters prays the recipient church in the Second Epistle to refuse to receive the preachers who do not belong to that theological tradition of which he is the spokesman.

One must go back to the Third Epistle in order to clarify the situation. The first striking point to have caught the attention of the exegetes is the lack of any theological interpretation of the conflict with Diotrophes. Diotrophes, says the Elder, is φιλοπρωτεύων. The simplest way to interpret this is to consider the difficulties as strictly personal. Abraham Malherbe has recently renewed this proposition<sup>(8)</sup>. John's Third Epistle is a highly important document, dealing with the inherent difficulties of the early church's organization in private homes. The hospitality offered to the community confers upon the giver a real power whose possibilities and limits one can see in Diotrophes' example. No doctrinal matter separates the Elder and Diotrophes. For personal reasons, the latter man does not care to receive members of the first man's entourage.

<sup>(8)</sup> A. MALHERBE, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (Philadelphia 1983) 92-112.

This reading of the conflict, however, does falter when the following observation is made: even if the conflict between the Elder and Diotrephes is not based on theological interpretation, one cannot say the same thing for the Elder's relations with Gaius and Demetrius, to whom he turns in order to oppose Diotrephes. This observation also weakens the classical interpretation, proposed by Harnack<sup>(9)</sup>, which sees in 3 John the echo of a third generation Christian conflict between the itinerant missionaries' organization and developing sedentary Christianity. Indeed, it is certainly the Johannine School's own tradition that is called upon, such as it is, to stand against Diotrephes' church. From the Elder's viewpoint, anyway, it is thus a matter of theological importance.

The third interpretation which deserves attention is that of W. Bauer<sup>(10)</sup>. The conflict shown in John's Third Epistle is characteristic of the emergence of the orthodoxy and, consequently, of the heresies in the Christianity of the end of the First Century. The stiffening noticeable in the other New Testament trajectories appears here within the framework of the Johannine School. Diotrephes is the head of a Gnostic church fragment which refuses the interventions of the Elder, the representative of Johannine orthodoxy.

After what we have seen of the Elder's argumentation, it is undeniable that he is the representative of a kind of orthodoxy. The question that remains is one of the orthodoxy of the orthodox Johannine tradition. For the moment, however, we will note that Bauer's compelling hypothesis is itself confronted with several difficulties. If Diotrephes is truly the representative of a Gnostic or a Docetic (variant of the hypothesis) movement, how do we explain, first of all, the Elder's implicit recognition of him? We must indeed note that Diotrephes' circle of influence is considered and solemnly recognized by the Elder as the Church and, moreover, that the legitimacy of Diotrephes' authority is not a point of contention in the Epistle. The Elder's protest deals with Diotrephes' actions as a church authority, not with the fact that he is such an authority. In addition, if the Elder is dealing with Gnostics or Docetics, why does he refrain from any theological argumentation when it would seem that his tradition could supply him the needed material for an attack?

The fourth classical interpretation of the conflict, then, is proposed by Käsemann<sup>(11)</sup>. Diotrephes is not a Gnostic at all but is, on the contrary, the head of a proto-Catholic, post-Pauline Church, and, as such, he refuses to

<sup>(9)</sup> A. VON HARNACK, "Über den 3. Johannesbrief", *Texte und Untersuchungen XV* (Berlin 1897) 3-27. For reasons which must be clarified, the Elder does not allow himself any criticism of a dogmatic nature in regard to Diotrephes. Using arguments of authority, the argumentation concerning Gaius, however, relies strongly on concepts such as ἀληθεία (vv. 3.4.8.12) and ἀγάπη (v. 6) which designate the system of beliefs and the social membership of the Johannine school. The asymmetry of the argumentation is confirmed in the reference which 3 John 12b makes to John 21,24, cf. 19,35.

<sup>(10)</sup> W. BAUER, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im älteren Christentum* (BHT 10; Tübingen 1964) 95-98.

<sup>(11)</sup> E. KÄSEMANN, "Ketzerei und Zeugen", *ZTK* 48 (1951) 292-311, re-edited in *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen I* (Göttingen 1964) 168-187.

recognize and to receive the Elder's Johannine brothers. The Gnostic and the heretic, if there is one, is not Diotrephes but the Elder. The enigma of the two Epistles is thus resolved in the following way: the Elder is certainly the defender of a Johannine tradition of revelation. This tradition is confronted with the ascendancy of the Hellenistic episcopal church (1 Tim 3,1-2; Titus 1,7), to which Diotrephes belongs, whose model can be recognized throughout both the Pastoral Epistles or those of Ignatius of Antioch<sup>(12)</sup>. The Elder does not attack Diotrephes' theology: he is not in a position to criticize him. The request he now makes of Gaius follows, in my opinion, another request — one made of the entire church — that has failed (3 John 9-10). As F. C. Baur has already clearly remarked, the letter here mentioned is none other than 2 John<sup>(13)</sup>, in which the Elder's tradition can first be pin-pointed. The formula in 2 John 7 does not constitute an anti-Docetic argumentation. Instead, such an anti-Docetic formula would be: they do not confess *that* — infinitive clause — Jesus Christ came ἐν σαρκί. An anti-Gnostic formula would be: not confessing that the *Christ* came ἐν σαρκί. This formula of 2 John 7 is a variant of 1 John 4,2 and expresses the movement's christology as a sacramental initiation (cf. John 6,51-58)<sup>(14)</sup>.

The most plausible interpretation is, consequently, the following: The Elder's argumentation in the last two Epistles attempts to maintain the Johannine tradition<sup>(15)</sup>. In order to do so, he calls upon the commandment of

<sup>(12)</sup> F. C. BAUR, *Vorlesungen über Neutestamentliche Theologie* (Leipzig 1864) 405; KÄSEMANN, "Ketzer und Zeuge", 178.

<sup>(13)</sup> F. C. BAUR, "Die johanneischen Briefe. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Kanons", *Theol Jahrb* 7 (1848) 293-337, here 328-337.

<sup>(14)</sup> The question is: how should we understand ἐν σαρκί? The aorist in John 1,14a certainly refers to the sending of the Son. However, both the perfect tense (1 John 4,2) and the present tense (2 John 7) are inadequate to designate the incarnation. The use of σάρξ in the Johannine school provides the key to the problem. Putting aside both σάρξ as a neutral term (John 17,2) and the opposition σάρξ/πνεῦμα (John 3,6; 6,63; 8,15), the concept is developed in the initiation found in 6,51-58. Σάρξ and αἷμα express the sacramental communion present in the Revealer's word. One can see the same thing in 1 John 4,2 and in 2 John 7: to confess *Jesus Christ* is not sufficient. This confession must be interpreted in the Johannine tradition. In other words, it must be seen through the initiation in John 6,51-58, in the light of which John 1,14 must be interpreted in the Johannine way and to which 1 John 4,2 and 2 John 7 refer: "to confess Jesus Christ as the Revealer coming ἐν σαρκί". The double usage of the perfect and the present tenses is thus evident.

<sup>(15)</sup> The Elder's title, as well as the relationship of relative recognition which both binds and opposes him to Diotrephes, can best be explained by Papias' mention of John the Elder (EUSEBIUS, *Historia Ecclesiastica* III, 39). On one hand, the author of the Epistles is forced to recognize the *de facto* authority of the local organization, of whose procedures he disapproves nevertheless. On the other hand, Diotrephes can send away the Elder's representatives and letters (3 John 9), but the Elder knows that he can impose them if he intervenes in person (v. 10a). The argumentative situation so described shows KÄSEMANN's interpretation to be unlikely, "Ketzer und Zeuge", 174-178, according to which the Elder would be a member of the college, excommunicated by Diotrephes. In the same direction, see G. BORNKAMM, *TWNT* VI, 676-678; R. BULTMANN, *Die drei Johannesbriefe* (KEK 14; Göttingen 1967) 95.

love as an argument to tighten the bonds between his communities against centrifugal tendencies still to be identified. (This is dealt with in the Second Epistle.) He then seeks the backing of his supporters (Gaius and the φίλοι, 3 John 15)<sup>(16)</sup> within the communities already belonging to the large local churches. The distrust of these churches towards the Elder is shown perfectly in Diotrephes' refusal, in which he not only does not intend to receive the Elder or his emissaries but, in addition, warns his own men against him.

## II. The School in Conflict: 1 John

In the past few decades, the historiography of Johannine Christianity has become a history just as pious and "edifying" as the Acts of the Apostles themselves. The outline usually conforms to the following pattern. In the first stage, a source of signs served missionary ends. It became a starting point for the elaboration of discourses which present a christological criticism, but which, at the same time, move toward a Gnosticizing interpretation of the Jesus event. This unfortunate retreating effect is thus corrected by an ecclesiastical redaction of the Gospel and then by the Epistles. In this way, after having made a good start, the history of the Johannine tradition finishes well. The temporary strayings, followed quickly by necessary corrections, provide a good exemplary history for repenting sinners.

One of the elements of this construction is the anti-Docetic interpretation of the Epistles. We have seen until now that the last two Epistles do not provide any useful information in this area. The church is certainly warned about the tempters. But these tempters are only designated as not belonging to the Johannine definition's model. We must then take the First Epistle as the central point in our discussion.

Recent research considers the anti-Docetic or anti-Gnostic polemic of the First Epistle as self-evident. According to this interpretation, the polemic is located on a christological, an ethical, and an anthropological level<sup>(17)</sup>. The adversaries deny the incarnation, do not obey the commandment of love, and claim to be without sin. The Epistle calls them Antichrists (1 John 2,18.18.22; 4,3). It teaches us that these Antichrists originated in the letter's own tradition (1 John 2,19), that they grew in number, and that their preaching was very successful. Together these facts are usually understood in the following way: the tensions found in the Gospel itself, through the ecclesiastical redaction's polemical interpretation, have opened the way for a clean

<sup>(16)</sup> On the history and function of the expression in the religious and philosophical Hellenistic communities (Pythagoreans, Epicureans, Platonists), cf. G. STÄHLIN, *TWNT* IX, 146; Culpepper, *School*, 272.

<sup>(17)</sup> Thus, in various ways WENGST, *Häresie und Orthodoxie*, 15-61; BROWN, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 109-144, which adds eschatology and pneumatology; BOGART, *Orthodox and Heretical Perfectionism*, 25-49, which concentrates its analysis on anthropology and on the question of sin; R. A. WHITACRE, *Johannine Polemic. The Role of Tradition and Theology* (SBL Dissertations Series 67; Chico 1982) 123-140.

breaking apart. From this point on, the Johannine circle is divided. One wing, holding a radical interpretation of the Gospel, is about to marginalize itself as a Gnostic-type movement. The other wing, represented in the First Epistle itself, resists the first tendency and is preparing to attach itself to the main church. This historical reconstitution is possible. It is, however, far from the only plausible interpretation.

The three themes of the commandment of love, christological confession, and sin are evidently related. One finds them bound together already in the typical formulae upon which the argumentation relies for the delimitation of its boundaries. The first formal group is made up of declarations of faith. They are usually introduced by *ὁμολογεῖν*, by *πιστεῦειν*, or, polemically, by *ἀρνεῖσθαι*. The first (1 John 2,22-23) makes belief in the Son the condition for having the Father. He who denies that Jesus is the Christ and, through this denial, refuses the Father and the Son, is an Antichrist. The second declaration is found in 1 John 4,2-3. Its theme is the distinction between spirits. The following rule is given: all spirits who confess that Jesus Christ is come *ἐν σαρκί* are from God, and all spirits who do not confess Jesus are not from God. The criterion given is the Johannine community's christological understanding as it is expressed in the Gospel. Just as in the Gospel of Truth, Jesus determines eschatological existence, since he is understood as the Man from Heaven who confers an other-worldly origin upon his own. The important question asked is indeed one of knowing who belongs to God and who does not. The third formula is found in 1 John 4,15. God is in that man who confesses that Jesus is the Son of God. The fourth formula turns this confession into the predestination of the faithful (1 John 5,1); everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. Finally, the fifth formula repeats v. 4,15 (1 John 5,5-6). It specifies, however, the christological belief in a soteriological manner: this is he who comes by water and by blood — Jesus Christ, not only in water, but in water and in blood. This specific detail refers to John 19,34. It is openly polemic: it is not a matter of baptism but of the bearer of revelation such as he is confessed in John's Gospel<sup>(18)</sup>. Let us conclude that the First Epistle of John defines the group

(18) The Epistle develops on this point a tradition of interpretation which is already found in the Gospel. 1 John 4,2 refers to John 6,51-58. 1 John 5,5-6 refers to John 19,34. In both cases, the Gospel narration reinterprets the sacramental tradition and makes it a collection of initiatory rites. John 19,34 turns baptism and communion into the symbolic gestures by which the initiated associate themselves with the destiny of the Savior reascending toward the Father. John 6,51-58 replaces the words of institution in Mark 14,22-25 by the following: the Last Supper is no longer theologically linked to Jesus' death and return (as in the Synoptic tradition and 1 Cor 11,23b-26), but it is linked to the knowledge of the revelation by confessing the Revealer. Cf. H. KÖSTER, *Introduction to the New Testament. Volume two: History and Literature of Early Christianity* (Foundations & Facets; Philadelphia 1982) 180-181. The construction of the whole of chapter 6 is significant in this regard. The two sign narratives (vv. 1-25) prepare the dialogue by bringing to light the necessity of a higher understanding of the Revealer's work. The dialogue itself develops in two parts. The first part plays with irony and misunderstanding and leads to Jesus' self-revelation (vv. 26-35). The second is organized in two parallel sequences (vv. 36-40 and 41-

of believers by their recognition of Jesus as the Son of God and by an interpretation of the Son as he who came and, in his coming, conferred upon his followers their divine origin. The understanding of the Christian faith expressed in the confessional formulae corresponds to the very structure of the revelation discourses in the Gospel. The community affirms its identity in attaching itself to Jesus as the one sent from heaven who distinguishes them from the world and unites them with God.

It is through the stereotyped form of the antitheses and of the antithetical parallelisms that the polemical expression of this self-understanding appears. The phrasing of 1 John 2,23; 4,4-6; and 5,10-12 reinforces and takes advantage of the convictions already present in the christological formulae. By confessing the Son of God, the community possesses life. In having the Son, it shows that it is from God, and those who are from God recognize themselves in the community. Its heavenly attachment determines its esoteric self-understanding, and its dualistic interpretation of its conflict with the false prophets is carried out in a related fashion. We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who does not know God does not listen to us.

Thus defined, the system of belief allows one to understand the dialectic of sin which appears in the antitheses of 1 John 1,6-10; 3,6; and 3,7-10. He who dwells in God does not sin; he who sins has never seen Him or known Him (3,6). The point of view is once again explicitly dualistic. He who sins is from the Devil, because the Devil has sinned from the beginning (3,7-10). The explanation developed here provides an understanding of Jesus' soteriological work of purifying the believers of their sins (1 John 1,7; 1,9; 2,2; 2,12; 3,5; 4,10). The apparent contradiction with 1 John 1,5-2,2 ("If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us".) is resolved at the same time. It is only Jesus' dying for the believers — and for the whole world — that allows those who confess their sins (1 John 1,9) to be freed from all injustice<sup>(19)</sup>.

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46): faith as knowledge can only result in divine predestination. The initiation itself (John 6,51.53-58) is immediately introduced by a summary of what preceded it (vv. 47-50) and by a final reply (v. 52). To speak of the "realism" of vv. 51-58 is without meaning, against R. BULTMANN, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (KEK II; Göttingen 1941) 161-162, 174-177, and the much discussed question of the traditional or redactional character of the passage is not decisive for the interpretation. The mention of the unction in 1 John 2,20.27 testifies to a development of the sacramental representations which will culminate in the systematic concepts in the Gospel of Philip (NHC II 51,29 – 86,19).

<sup>(19)</sup> Here, as well, it is superfluous to resolve the tension between 1 John 1,6-10 and 2,1-2 by a literary critical operation. Thus KÄSEMANN, "Ketzer und Zeuge", note 47, who contests R. BULTMANN, "Analyse des ersten Johannesbriefes", *Festgabe für Adolf Jülicher zum 70. Geburtstag* (Tübingen 1927) 138-158, re-edited in *Exegetica. Aufsätze zur Erforschung des Neuen Testaments* (Tübingen 1967) 105-123, taken up by H. BRAUN, "Literaranalyse im ersten Johannesbrief", *ZTK* 48 (1951) 262-292, re-edited in *Gesammelte Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt* (Tübingen 1962) 210-242, according to which 2,1-2 would be a redactional commentary from one source (Gnostic according to Braun's interpretation of Bultmann; radical primitive Christian in Braun's own proposal).

The development of 1 John 1,5-2,2 is generally understood as polemical. Thus the author would be implicitly criticizing the Gnostics who claim to have escaped from the realm of sin. The system of convictions already established in 1 John 3,6 and 3,7-10 clearly shows that the problem must be turned around. It is because the argumentation of the First Epistle operates by using categories which belong structurally to Gnostic thought patterns that those men not belonging to the eschatological community of the Man from Heaven cannot claim to be sinless without being liars. The perspective of interpretation is the same as that found in the Second Treatise of the Great Seth<sup>(20)</sup>. Nevertheless, one must not exclude the possibility that the conditional in v.6 and v.8 is aimed directly at Antichrists or at false prophets. But these can be found in quite diverse places — and not necessarily first in Docetic or in radical Gnostic groups. The first candidates are found among Diotrophes' fellows. In the Pastoral Epistles, for example, sin belongs with heretics and misbehavers (1 Tim 5,22.24; 2 Tim 3,6). As for the believers, they must hold themselves apart through their moral conduct.

The thesis which I would like to defend is that the Johannine Epistles, with their particular polemical traits, could very well be understood as the precursors of the Gnostic polemic against the proto-Catholic church, such as we can observe so remarkably in the Apocalypse of Peter or in the Testimony of Truth<sup>(21)</sup>. This is what I would like to show through the example of the third theme appearing in the antithetical formulae — it deals with the commandment of love<sup>(22)</sup>.

The related texts are 1 John 2,4-6; 2,9-11; and 4,7-8. The argumentation makes the observance of the commandment of love the correlate of being born of God. Let us love one another, because love is from God; and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, because God is love (1 John 4,7-8). The theme continues to be developed in the same way throughout the Epistle. It is expressed by the series of axiomatic declarations (in this we know, we knew, or we will know that) which makes the practice of love, of the commandments, and of justice the criterion for belonging to the heavenly realm (1 John 2,3.5.29; 3,10.16.19; 5,2; exceptions are 3,24 and 4,13 which are pneumatological and 4,2.6 which is christological). But what is meant by the commandment of love in the First Epistle? The alteration in the use of certain concepts between the Gospel and the First Epistle is significant. First, there is the idea of loving God and not the world (2,15[bis]). This double usage is unknown in the Gospel

<sup>(20)</sup> NHC VII 2 62,34; 63,3.11.17.25; 64,17.29.

<sup>(21)</sup> Cf. K. KOSCHORKE, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker gegen das kirchliche Christentum, Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Nag-Hammadi-Traktate "Apokalypse des Petrus" (NHC VII, 3) und "Testimonium Veritatis" (NHC IX,3) (NHS 12; Leiden 1978).*

<sup>(22)</sup> This can also be shown through the example of eschatology. The dialectic in 1 John between a present eschatology (hardened even more in relation to the Gospel, 1 John 2,18; 3,14-15; 5,11.13) and the expectation of a final manifestation of the elect (1 John 2,28; 3,2; 4,17) closely corresponds to the representations found in the Treatise on Resurrection (NHC I 4 43,25 - 50,18).



and confirms the accentuation of dualism in the Epistle. The latter reuses the Gospel's expression of loving one another (3,11.28; 4,7.11.12). But it more often calls for loving the brother (2,10; 3,10; 4,20.21; cf. 5,1, he who was begotten of God), or the brothers (3,14; cf. 5,2, the children of God). This love shows itself in solidarity — including economic and material solidarity — between brothers (3,17). This is its internal dimension. But it is also used as a theological criterion and argument — as it was probably already used in the Gospel's farewell discourses. He who does not love the brothers is from the Devil, and God is not in him. Here, then, lies the distinction between the eschatological community and the liars. As we can see from the use of the commandment of love in the Second Epistle (2 John 5) and from the destiny of the brothers in the Third Epistle, the difference is not to be found in the fact that the implicit adversaries would not recognize the pertinence of the commandment of love. But, *stricto sensu*, it is found in the attitude taken towards the brothers — that is, the members of the community formed by the Man from Heaven. The Antichrists, who supposedly belonged to this community but who never truly were a part of it, and who in fact left it, revealed their true membership in treating the Johannine elect in the same way as 1 Tim 6,3 ff. treated the false teachers.

### III. The Hermeneutics of Community: John

Neither the Gospel nor the Epistles bear witness to any sort of naïve Docetism. The Docetic or Anti-Docetic question interests neither one in any way whatsoever. In any case, the debate should not be carried out in the area of dogmatics, the study of heretics, or the history of religions. But, in fact, it is not a matter of chance that in the First Epistle of John the term κόσμος had come to designate the orthodox proto-Catholic church of post-Pauline Hellenistic Christianity. The author of the First Epistle and, later, the Elder have faithfully maintained a heritage established by the whole composition of the Gospel itself<sup>(23)</sup>.

The *Semeia-Quelle* probably never existed. Indeed, we must remark that the seven signs present no parallel structure at all which would attest to a common elaboration. A possible comparison with pre-Markan collections of

<sup>(23)</sup> The question of the order of composition of the Gospel and the Epistles had been the subject of many discussions in the 19th century. Although recently rehandled by G. STRECKER, "Die Anfänge der johanneischen Schule", *NTS* 32 (1986) 31-47, the hypothesis that 1 John preceded John has been refuted in detail by F. C. BAUR, "Das Verhältnis des ersten Johannesbrief zum Evangelium", *Theol Jahrb* 16 (1857) 315-331; H. CONZELMANN, "Was von Anfang war", *Neutestamentliche Studien für R. Bultmann* (BZNW 21; Berlin 1954) 194-201, re-edited in *Theologie als Schriftauslegung. Aufsätze zum Neuen Testament* (München 1974) 207-214; G. KLEIN, "Das wahre Licht scheint schon", *ZTK* 68 (1971) 261-326 and especially H. J. HOLTZMANN, "Das Problem des ersten johanneischen Briefes in seinem Verhältnis zum Evangelium", *Jahrbücher für Protestantische Theologie* 7 (1881) 690-712; 8 (1882) 128-152, 316-342, 460-485.

the conflict stories or miracles stories is significant here. The pre-Markan collections bring together traditions which were visibly already unified at their regrouping. Nothing of this sort can be observed in the series of Johannine narratives. The Synoptic comparison next sheds light on the diverse origins of the materials. The healing of the ruler's son (John 4,46-54), that of the paralytic of Bethesda (John 5,2-9), the story of the feeding of the five thousand (John 6,5-14), the story of Jesus walking on the sea (John 6,16-21), and the healing of the blind man (John 9,1-7) are a result of a Johannine elaboration on given items borrowed from the Synoptic tradition, as we can see in the common regrouping of the two episodes in chapter 6 and the striking similarities in the vocabulary of the two parallels<sup>(24)</sup>. Only the stories of the wedding in Cana and the resurrection of Lazarus cannot be derived from the known patrimony. Neither one presents the formal characteristics of the miracle stories, and, in both cases, the theological elaboration inside of the Gospel as a whole is so evident that it must be a question of two redactional compositions. The element of the listing of signs in John 4,54 is the outcome of the narrative organization for the whole of the Gospel, just as with the listing of days in John 2,1<sup>(25)</sup>. Here, they serve as bonds between the story in the Synoptic tradition and in the Johannine composition. Finally, the metalinguistic evaluation that John 20,30-31, with John 21,24-25, gives to the Gospel's total narrative is, in its literary form, redactional. It would be particularly naïve to believe that the whole of the Gospel would have been reworked without touching the declaration of intention since its first version.

From the two-source hypothesis proposed by Bultmann, according to which John would have been written using a source of signs and a Gnostic source of discourses, exegetical discussion has only kept the first half as a serious hypothesis. However, it is perhaps the second part which is correct<sup>(26)</sup>. If the composition of the Johannine Gospel cannot be explained using a supposed source of signs, it can, however, be very well seen as based on a tradition of teaching and of initiation by a bringer of revelation. This is the concept that is defended by H. Leroy, through his analysis of the technique of misunderstanding, by W. A. Meeks, through the Johannine narratives' structures of repetition, and by H. Köster, through the comparison of forms with such Gnostic texts as the *Dialogue of the Savior*<sup>(27)</sup>. This pro-

<sup>(24)</sup> Example: John 6,5-15. The scenario as a whole borrows textually from Mark 6,32-44, with elements from Mark 8,1-10. The parallel of John 6,10 with Mark 6,39 is especially striking. The mention of the grass in the Markan text is a response to vv. 31.34 and is an interpretation of Ps 23. John 6,10 comes out of the framework worked out by the Fourth Gospel (interpretation of the sign in vv. 14-15, the elaboration of the dialogue form and the individualization of Jesus' interlocutors, as in the Gnostic gospels). It serves as an explicit reference to the Synoptic tradition. It expresses the desire to explain the true meaning of the episode told only in its worldly sense in the Synoptics.

<sup>(25)</sup> I owe this observation to my teacher Prof. Dr. Heinz Liebing.

<sup>(26)</sup> In this direction: KÖSTER, *Introduction II*, 178-185.

<sup>(27)</sup> H. LEROY, *Rätsel und Missverständnis*. Ein Beitrag zur Formgeschichte des Johannesevangeliums (BBB 30; Bonn 1968); W. A. MEEKS, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism", *JBL* 91 (1972) 44-72, take up in translation,

posal's strength lies in the fact that, while relying on a minimum of hypotheses, it allows a coherent explanation of the Gospel's narrative composition, its presentation as an incomplete work, and the expository structure of its discourse. The story matter is the Son of Man's descent, his entrance into the world; then, starting with the narrator's solemn indication introduced in 13,1-5, his ascension and glorification. The outline defined in this way describes not only the identity of the Son of Man, but it also constitutes the contents of his esoteric knowledge which distinguishes him from men belonging to this world<sup>(28)</sup>, and it organizes the Gospel's own narrative layout. The coming of the Man from Heaven is presented in the first dialogues as the *krisis* of the world, while, in the second part, the Judgement is linked with his return<sup>(29)</sup>. The open proceedings in the first part correspond to the circle of disciples' initiation in the second part. It is through the whole of the narrative configuration as it is constituted that Johannine Christianity's system of beliefs is expressed. Its expressive structure is typically Gnostic. A small group of believers holds itself aloof from a world which, in its very essence, belongs to the lower order<sup>(30)</sup>. The dualistic conception which characterizes the Gospel and the Epistles finds its etiology in the confession of Jesus as the Son of God who came and who will come again in the flesh. We can remark that the Passion narrative itself falls under this general perspective. Except for several isolated traditions, the Johannine group essentially borrows elements here as well from the Synoptic scenario. It integrates them into its own presentation by interpreting Jesus' death as his glorification and by describing, in the process, the believers' situation as no longer belonging to this world.

The narrative composition corresponds to the Gospel scenario. The classical Bultmannian interpretation presents the chaotic character of the Johannine narrative as resulting from a discontinuous succession of redactions. It thus offers an explanation, first, for the addition of the second farewell discourse (John 15-17), then, for the introduction of the so-called sacramental pericopes (John 6,51-58; 19,34-35) and for the new conclusion in chapter 21. The weakness of the analysis lies in its inability to explain the work's apparent unfinished character. As these exegetes have seen for some time, we would only need to change the order at the end of chapter 3, switch around chapters 5 and 6, move 14,29-31 to the end of ch. 17, and combine 20,30-31 and 21,24-25 in order to have a presentable entity<sup>(31)</sup>. The simple fact that

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"Die Funktion des vom Himmel herabgestiegenen Offenbarers für das Selbstverständnis der johanneischen Gemeinde", *Zur Soziologie des Urchristentums* (W. A. MEEKS, ed.) (ThB 62; München 1979) 245-283; KÖSTER, *Introduction II*, 178-183.

<sup>(28)</sup> MEEKS, "Die Funktion", 267-269.

<sup>(29)</sup> MEEKS, "Die Funktion", 268.

<sup>(30)</sup> MEEKS, "Die Funktion", 277.

<sup>(31)</sup> The page-inversion hypothesis, called upon to reinforce the redactor-hypothesis, weakens even more the total solution. Thus, for example, Ph. VIELHAUER, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur* (Berlin - New York 1975) 420-423. For a theological interpretation of the canonical recomposition by the redactor, see W. WILKENS, *Die Entstehungsgeschichte des vierten Evangeliums* (Zollikon 1958).

the ecclesiastical redactor did not watch out for this shows that the rule which guided the Gospel's elaboration was not one of narrative logic but of a structure of communication apparent in the juxtapositions, the repetitions, the irony, the misunderstandings, and the metaphors created and used in the discourses themselves. It is not a linear presentation, but it works through successive elucidations in which the elements of dialogue serve as a starting point for the development of the themes. As W. A. Meeks has shown, it is not only christology which constitutes the Johannine community's etiology and its understanding of faith, but it is the book itself in its hermeneutical composition. The ordering of the entire Gospel corresponds to the ordering of the material inside the different sequences. We can see that the Gospel is the result of a series of redactions, since the new narrative elements explicitly seem to be taking sides with anterior elements. This interpretation must take into account, however, the double fact that the elaboration by interpretative adjunctions corresponds organically to the Johannine community's understanding of itself and of its founding narrative, and that, in addition, according to the logic of its own discourse, the Gospel in its present state is perfectly complete. The metaphorical construction of the totality of ch. 21 and the sacramental symbolism of John 19,34-35, which finds its ulterior development in the First Epistle (1 John 5,5-6, but also 1 John 2,20.27:  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\mu\alpha$ ) and in Gnosticism (cf. Gospel of Truth, Gospel of Philip, Apocalypse of John)<sup>(32)</sup> top off the esoteric and initiatory structure of the whole.

The etiological function which the Johannine Gospel fulfills for the eschatological community of the Man from heaven explains its own conclusion in its reference to the founding witness, whether historical or fictitious, of the Beloved Disciple (John 19,34-35; 21,24-25). In the First Epistle, then, the literary *genre* of the letter takes over for the *genre* of the Gospel. Through its continual references to the founding narrative, the Epistle pursues the Gospel's hermeneutical enterprise. The hostile world is no longer seen in Judaism or in the Gentile society's animosity, but, from now on, the hostility comes from the pretensions and lack of understanding of Diotrophes and his fellows, from those who were brothers but who had never really been brothers. The Second and Third Epistles represent a third stage. The First Epistle had been assimilated within the Gospel, and the last two together make up the tradition from which the Elder attempts, by his personal interventions, to maintain the Johannine identity and mission<sup>(33)</sup>.

<sup>(32)</sup> NHC I 3 36,17-20.24.26; 3 67,5, etc.

<sup>(33)</sup> The narrative of John 6,60-66, then the narrative of 1 John 2,18-27, and then the action taken in 2 John and related in 3 John 10, and finally the last appeal to Gaius in 3 John show that the history of the Johannine tradition was, historically, one of failure. The First Epistle's recourse to the tradition of the origins (what was in the beginning, 1,1; 2,7.13.14.24; 3,8.11; cf. 2 John 5-6) is made necessary by the fact that the "canonization" of the Gospel under the Beloved Disciple's authority (John 21,24-25) was not enough to prevent a new splintering of the eschatological community. After the First Epistle's affirmation of the eschatological consciousness of the movement, the last two Epistles take the defensive. The author now tries explicitly to use his authority as elder, and the argumentation becomes more tense. 2 John first attempts to reuse 1 John in

Has the Elder worked in vain? It is we who must finally decide. He is, in the New Testament, the last defender of a school of interpretation of Christianity which is offered, among others, as a possibility for understanding our existence. He stands for the conviction, perhaps involuntarily present in the Canon, that the possibility for liberty is stronger than the risk of here-sy.

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order to avoid the dispersion of the addressed community. In this way, it testifies to the failure of 1 John. 3 John, in turn, leaves only one hope — that a personal intervention by the Elder would turn the situation around. According to R. A. CULPEPPER, *1 John. 2 John. 3 John* (Knox Preaching Guides; Atlanta 1985), 1 and 2 John would have been two parallel and simultaneous enterprises. This hypothesis finds itself confronted by the character of 2 John's argumentation, which presupposes knowledge of 1 John.

## "Let God Arise and End the Reign of Sin!" A Contribution to the Study of Pauline Parenthesis

### *The Third Person Imperative in Romans 6,12*

Romans 6,11 contains the second imperative in the letter<sup>(1)</sup>, "consider yourselves" (*logizesthe*), which concludes the paragraph 6,1-11 with a call for Paul's readers to recognize the new anthropological situation that obtains in Jesus Christ: they are dead to Sin<sup>(2)</sup>, alive to God. Perception, then, is primary, and precedes the more properly parenetic exhortation which follows in the short paragraph 6,12-14<sup>(3)</sup>. Here three more imperatives appear in quick succession. It is no accident that in 6,12, for only the fourth time in the letter, the word "body" appears. The body, for Paul, is that with which one *does* things that relate to other people or to cosmic powers; hence its appearance in this short paragraph of exhortation and its reappearance at the beginning of the main parenetic section of the letter, in 12,1<sup>(4)</sup>.

Because Rom 6,11-14 contains the first string of imperatives in the letter, these verses have a critical importance for understanding the nature of Pauline parenthesis. Of the four imperatives in these verses, the most difficult to grasp is the third person imperative *basileuetō* in 6,12, and its meaning is the main subject of this study. The English translations adopt a number of different stratagems for rendering this word. A sampling reveals that most of them take the subject of the sentence to be Paul's Roman addressees:

RSV & Douay: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies (Douay: body) . . .".

NAB: "Do not, therefore, let sin rule your mortal body . . .".

NASB & NIV: "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body . . .".

(1) The first is in 3,4; see below, p. 389.

(2) On the capitalization of the word "Sin", see below, p. 388.

(3) Rom 6,1-14 is a discrete section of the letter, made up of two paragraphs, 6,1-11 and 6,12-14. Rom 6,15 begins a new section; it contains one of the rhetorical questions which structure chapters 6 and 7: 6,1.15; 7,7.13). All have the form "what shall we say?" + false inference + *mē genoito* + reason the inference is false (see P. J. ACHTEMEIER, *Romans* [Interpretation; Atlanta 1985] 102). Rom 6,11 concludes the paragraph 6,1-11, which revolves around the theme expressed in its concluding words: "dead to sin, alive to God in Christ Jesus" (see E. KÄSEMANN, *Commentary on Romans* [Grand Rapids 1980] 163).

(4) E. SCHWEIZER, "Sōma, etc.", *TDNT* VII, 1024-1084, esp. 1064; cf. E. KÄSEMANN, "On Paul's Anthropology", *Perspectives on Paul* (Philadelphia 1969) 1-31, esp. 17-23; idem, *Romans*, 176-177, 226.

Phillips: "Do not, then, allow sin to establish any power over your mortal bodies...".

JB: "That is why you must not let sin reign in your mortal bodies...".

NEB: "So sin must no longer reign in your mortal body...".

TEV: "Sin must no longer rule in your mortal bodies...".

Moffat: "Sin is not to reign, then, over your mortal bodies...".

The majority of these translations make an implicit or explicit "you" the subject of the sentence. These renderings, however, are in clear contradiction to the Greek original, in which *Sin* is the subject<sup>(5)</sup>. The NEB, TEV, and Moffat recognize that Sin is the subject, but lose the imperatival sense of the verb *basileuetō*.

The difficulty, of course, is that English has no exact equivalent to the Greek third person imperative<sup>(6)</sup>. This is a form in which a command is issued to a person who is either not present or unknown<sup>(7)</sup>. In English, one way to approximate this form is by use of the word "let", as in "Let George do it!", but the same word is more frequently used in the sense of "allow"; hence the misleading nature of the first five translations listed above.

How, then, can a third person imperative be rendered so that both its imperatival sense and its character as a third person is recognized? More importantly, what does it *mean* for Paul to issue a third person imperative that has an entity known as "Sin" for its subject?

#### *The Structure of Romans 6,12-14*

A word about the structure of the section in which this imperative occurs may help us to begin to answer this question. Rom 6,12-14 is a chiasm<sup>(8)</sup>:

12	let not Sin reign...	A
13a	do not present your members...	B
13b	present yourselves... and your members...	B'
14a	Sin will not reign over you...	A'

<sup>(5)</sup> This displacement of the subject of the Greek sentence is not limited to English translations. See e.g. the paraphrase of U. WILCKENS, "Sollen sie [die Adressaten] nun... die Sünde nicht in ihrem sterblichen Leib herrschen lassen" (*Der Brief an die Römer II, Röm 6-11* [EKKNT 6/2; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1980] 20).

<sup>(6)</sup> B. M. NEWMAN and E. A. NIDA acknowledge the difficulty of translating the third person imperative in Rom 6,12 in their *Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Helps for Translators 14; London 1973) 118.

<sup>(7)</sup> Cf. J. W. VOELZ, *Fundamental Greek Grammar* (St. Louis 1986) 189. I am grateful to Dr. Voelz for his helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article; I also wish to thank J. Louis Martyn for bringing his usual critical acumen to bear on it.

<sup>(8)</sup> Although translating third person imperatives with "let" has its problems, as indicated above, for lack of an alternative I will employ this translation occasionally in what follows.

In the inside parts of the chiasm (BB' = v. 13), the subject is Paul's addressees in Rome. In the outside parts of the chiasm (AA' = vv. 12,14a), Sin is the subject. We spell this word with a capital "S," since it is personified as a cosmic power, the demonic counterpart to God<sup>(9)</sup>, as is clear from the antithetical parallelism in v. 13:

do not present  
your members  
as weapons of unrighteousness  
to Sin

but present  
yourselves  
to God...

and your members  
as weapons of righteousness  
to God.

But if Sin is personified as a cosmic power, the question becomes all the more pressing: what sense is there in a third person imperative which has, not a human being, but a demonic entity as its subject? The rhetoric is close to that in 1 Cor 15,55, where Paul, quoting Hos 13,14, addresses a related power: "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?". True, human beings are *involved* in the address in Rom 6,12; the arena in which Sin is to be dethroned is "your mortal body", and the third person singular imperative of v. 12 immediately becomes the second person plural imperatives of v. 13. But what exactly is the nature of the imperative in v. 12?

Colossians 3,15-16 presents striking structural similarities to 6,12-14, and throws light on the question<sup>(10)</sup>:

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which [peace] you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...

As in Rom 6,12-14, third person present imperatives (*brabeuetō*, *enoikeitō*) alternate with a second person imperative (*ginesthe*), and the third person imperatives occur in exhortations that relate cosmic powers to the earthly, human sphere:

<i>Rom 6,12</i>	<i>Col 3,15</i>	<i>Col 3,16</i>
let not reign	let rule	let dwell
Sin	peace of Christ	word of Christ
in your mortal body	in your hearts	in you.

<sup>(9)</sup> See C. K. BARRETT, *The Epistle to the Romans* (HNTC; New York 1957) 128; K. KERTELGE, "Rechtfertigung" bei Paulus (Münster 1966) 267; H. SCHLIER, *Der Römerbrief* (HTKNT 6; Freiburg 1977) 203.

<sup>(10)</sup> The usefulness of Colossians for our purpose is not dependent on its authenticity as a Pauline letter, since we are interested in 3,15-16 mainly for its form, and since it at least comes from a Pauline school.



As in Rom 6,12, so in Col 3,15-16 human beings are not directly addressed by the third person imperatives; rather, the subjects of the verbs are cosmic potencies, "the peace of Christ", "the word of Christ". It would make as little sense to think that human beings had direct control over these manifestations of Christ's eschatological reign as to think that they had the power to defeat the cosmic adversary of that reign, Sin. Rather, as the commentaries recognize, the third person imperatives in Col 3,15-16 express *prayers*<sup>(11)</sup>. The subjects of the verbs are subordinate cosmic powers, but it is *God* who is being invoked to manifest these powers in the earthly sphere.

### *The Use of the Third Person Imperative in Prayer*

The third person imperative is at home in the language of prayer<sup>(12)</sup>. This suitability is well illustrated by the second and third petitions of the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6,9-10/ Luke 11,2): "Let your kingdom come, let your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth". Here again cosmic potencies are the subjects of third person singular imperatives, and the call is for God to cause the powers to manifest themselves in the earthly sphere. A similar usage is apparent in the first imperative in Romans, the third person imperative *ginesthō* in 3,4. "Let God be true" is a prayer for God to demonstrate his truthfulness actively in the world<sup>(13)</sup>. I would suggest that exactly the same sort of thing is going on in Rom 6,12, though it is expressed negatively rather than positively: the defeat of Sin, rather than the victory of God, is called for<sup>(14)</sup>.

<sup>(11)</sup> E. LOHSE, *A Commentary on the Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia 1971) 149; E. SCHWEIZER, *The Letter to the Colossians: A Commentary* (Minneapolis 1982) 208. Lohse and Schweizer do not specifically defend their identification of Col 3,15a.16a as prayers. This identification probably rests on the observation just made: cosmic powers are being called into play.

<sup>(12)</sup> Cf. A. T. ROBERTSON, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville 1934) 947, on the use of the imperative in petition and prayer. According to Robertson, "the NT shows a sharp departure in the use of the imperative in petitions (rare in the older Greek and in the *koinē*)". As we will see below, however, this departure has been anticipated in the LXX.

<sup>(13)</sup> See E. KÄSEMANN, who refutes the idea that God cannot "become" but can only be "confirmed", saying that God's "becoming" corresponds to the apocalyptic worldview: "God's deity still awaits its definitive revelation, and prayer is to be made for it. From the perspective of the end of history... *ginesthō alēthēs* really means: May it become true and attest itself so" (*Romans*, 80). Contra C. E. B. CRANFIELD, who claims that *ginesthō* conveys no idea of becoming and that the imperative is declaratory in meaning (*Romans, I: Introduction and Commentary on Romans I-VIII* [ICC; Edinburgh 1975] 181). This is an *ad hoc* explanation; no declaratory meaning of the imperative is listed in the grammars of Smyth, Robertson, Blass-Debrunner, or Moulton-Howard-Turner.

<sup>(14)</sup> The prayer-like nature of 6,12 would be more readily apparent without the phrase "in your mortal bodies". The second person plural possessive "your", however, is not an insuperable difficulty for the interpretation of 6,12 as

Use of the third person imperative in this manner is not a Christian invention. The form is constantly used for prayers and imprecations in Psalms<sup>(15)</sup>, and it can alternate with the optative with little apparent difference in meaning<sup>(16)</sup>. Alternations between third and second person imperatives, analogous to the alternation in Rom 6,12-13, are not unknown in such contexts<sup>(17)</sup>, and the imperatives often give way to promises expressed in the future indicative, as in Rom 6,14<sup>(18)</sup>. Third person imperatives are used to pray for peace, as in Col 3,15 (see Psalm 121,7), as well as to invoke God's power to bring wickedness to an end and to scatter his enemies<sup>(19)</sup>:

Arise, O Lord, in your wrath; be exalted in the utmost boundaries of my enemies... *Let the wickedness of sinners come to an end*; and then you will direct the righteous (Psalm 7,7-10).

Let God arise, and *let his enemies be scattered*; and *let them that hate him flee* from before him. As smoke vanishes, *let them vanish*; as wax melts before the fire, so *let the sinners perish* from before God. But let the righteous rejoice... (Psalm 67,2-4).

Both of these psalms, as well as many others that use third person imperatives, employ terminology drawn from Israel's holy war traditions<sup>(20)</sup>. God is called upon to go into battle against the forces of evil, as he once did in delivering his people from the Egyptians and defeating their enemies in the conquest of Canaan.

#### *Roman 6,12 and Apocalyptic Holy War Theology*

This holy war theology bloomed again in apocalyptic circles and especially at Qumran, as is particularly evident from the War Scroll; and it is this

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a prayer, as the second person plurals "your" and "you" in Col 3,15-16 demonstrate. This passage also demonstrates that alternation between third and second person imperatives is conceivable in a context of prayer; see further the LXX passages cited in n. 17 below.

<sup>(15)</sup> Examples can be found in Psalms 5-7; 9; 21; 34-35; 39; 47; 65-71; 73; 78-79; 82; 85; 89; 96-98; 103; 108; 118; 120-121; 128-130; 137; 140; 148-149. The most important of these passages will be cited below.

<sup>(16)</sup> See Psalms 30,18-19; 34,25-27; 39,15-17; 66,8; 68,15-16; 69,3-5; 118,169-173 (all verse numbers according to Rahlfs pocket edition). Different manuscripts of the same passage sometimes show variation between third person imperatives and optatives; see e.g. Psalms 6,11; 34,4.26-27; 39,15; 69,3 in A. RAHLFS, *Septuaginta Societatis Scientiarum Göttingensis X: Psalmi cum Odis* (Göttingen 1931). On the use of the imperative for the optative in later Greek, see N. TURNER, *Syntax*, vol. III of *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (ed. J. H. MOULTON) (Edinburgh 1963) 118.

<sup>(17)</sup> See e.g. Psalms 9,11-12; 21,24; 47,12-13; 65,4-5; 67,2-5; 96,7; 97,6-7; 149,1-3.

<sup>(18)</sup> See e.g. Psalm 5,12; 9,18-19; 34,4-10.26-28; 95,11-12; 97,7-8; 149,3-4.

<sup>(19)</sup> Translations of LXX passages have been updated from C. L. BRENTON, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English* (Grand Rapids 1982; orig. 1851).

<sup>(20)</sup> On these traditions, see esp. G. VON RAD, *Der Heilige Krieg im alten Israel* (Zürich 1951).

sort of apocalyptic holy war theology that Paul is drawing on in Rom 6,12-14<sup>(21)</sup>. A typical passage describes the participation of God's elect, the fighters of the Qumran community, in the final endtime battle against the children of darkness<sup>(22)</sup>.

They shall bring down the slain by the judgment of God and shall cause the enemy line to give way by the power of God . . . And sovereignty shall belong to the God of Israel, and he shall display his strength in the saints of his people (6,5-6).

Here, as in Rom 6,12-14, there is a complex interplay between divine and human action. Human beings certainly play an important role; *they* will bring down the slain and cause the enemy line to give way. Yet all of this will happen, consistently with holy war theology, "by the power of God"<sup>(23)</sup>. Moreover, the enemies that will be defeated in this battle will not just be human beings:

This day is God's hour to bend and bring low the prince of the dominion of ungodliness (17,5-6).

. . . when the great hand of God is raised over Belial and over all the lot of his empire to strike a final blow (18,1).

And on the standard of the thousand they shall write, "Anger of God furious against Belial and against the men of his lot, without any remnant" (4,2-3).

Behind the human enemies there stands Belial, a cosmic power of ungodliness. Against such a foe only God can strike the deathblow; the hour is close when he will do so. The War Scroll does not contain an exact counterpart to Rom 6,12 in a prayer to God to strike this blow, but it has something closely analogous in the execrations of Belial and his host:

And cursed be Belial because of the plan of hostility, and may he be execrated because of his guilty service! And cursed be all the spirits

<sup>(21)</sup> On the relation of holy war theology to the Psalms and to apocalyptic, see F. M. CROSS, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA. 1973). On the importance of this theology for the New Testament, see O. BETZ, "Jesu heiliger Krieg", *NT* 2 (1957-58) 116-137 and J. MARCUS, "Entering into the Kingly Power of God" (forthcoming, *JBL*).

<sup>(22)</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Qumran literature are from A. DUPONT-SOMMER, *The Essene Writings from Qumran* (Gloucester, MA. 1973). They have been checked against the Hebrew originals and the German translation in E. LOHSE, *Die Texte aus Qumran. Hebräisch und Deutsch* (München 1964). The text of the following translation has been slightly altered from Dupont-Sommer.

<sup>(23)</sup> Cf. the inscriptions on the trumpets and standards of the children of light, which emphasize divine action exclusively: "Mighty deeds of God to disperse the enemy and to put to flight all who hate righteousness" (IQM 3,5-6); "Mighty hand of God in the battle to bring down all the slain of unfaithfulness" (3,8); "Mysteries of God to destroy ungodliness. God destroys all the sons of darkness" (3,8-9); cf. 4,3-4.

of his lot because of their wicked plan, and may they be execrated because of their defiled and unclean service!

Seen with such apocalyptic conceptions in the background, the third person imperative in Rom 6,12 begins to make sense. What the Qumran secretaries foresaw for the imminent future Paul sees here as a present reality: "This day is God's hour . . . to bring low the dominion of ungodliness"; cf. 2 Cor 6,2<sup>(24)</sup>. Paul calls on God to perform this eschatological deed not by slaughter of human enemies but by overthrowing the reign of Sin in the bodies of his Roman addressees<sup>(25)</sup>. This apocalyptic interpretation is consonant with the grammar of 6,12, for *mē* + the present imperative usually forbids the continuance of an action already in progress, and is thus a demand to desist from the action<sup>(26)</sup>. In 6,12a, then, Paul is not issuing a general exhortation, but calling for the overthrow of an entity that is presently reigning. Therefore a good paraphrase of the first few words in 6,12 might run: "Let God arise and end the reign of sin!"<sup>(27)</sup>.

So far our use of holy war traditions for interpreting Rom 6,12-14 has been based on an attempt to understand the significance of the third person imperative in 6,12. The appropriateness of this *religionsgeschichtlich* background is confirmed by some observations about the rest of the passage. The entire second half of chapter 6 is replete with language of domination<sup>(28)</sup>. Some of it is explicitly military and reflects holy war ideas. In 6,13, for example, Paul calls on his addressees to present their bodily members to God to be used as weapons of righteousness. The terms Paul uses here (*presenting* one's bodily members as *weapons* of righteousness) have a military ring<sup>(29)</sup>, and comparison with the War Scroll is again illuminating.

<sup>(24)</sup> There is for Paul also, however, a "not yet" dimension in God's victory over cosmic evil; see below, n. 39.

<sup>(25)</sup> I cannot agree with G. E. CANNON that the intermingling of singular "body" and plural "you" here points to a corporate or community sense of "body" (*The Use of Traditional Materials in Colossians* [Macon 1983] 213). Rather, "body" is being used as an anthropological term. "Your body" in 6,12 is synonymous with "your members" in 6,13, and the desires that rebel against God are the desires *of the body* in 6,12. Probably the plural genitive *hymōn* ("of you") in 6,12 is being used in a distributive sense: "Let sin not reign in the body of each one of you".

<sup>(26)</sup> E. D. W. BURTON, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek* (Grand Rapids 1976; orig. 1898) § 165.

<sup>(27)</sup> I have borrowed the wording of Psalm 67,2, referred to above, p. 390.

<sup>(28)</sup> *Basileuein*: 6,12; *hypakouein*: 6,12.17; *hōpla*: 6,13; *kyrieuein*: 6,14; *doulos* 6,16-17.19-20; *hypakoe*: 6,16; *douloun*: 6,18.22.

<sup>(29)</sup> As BARRETT, *Romans*, 128 notes, *hōpla* can mean: 1) a ship's tackle, 2) tools, or 3) weapons. In every other NT usage the meaning "weapons" is clear (John 18,3; Rom 13,12; 2 Cor 6,7; 10,4), and this is also the predominant sense of the word in classical Greek (see LS 1240). Since it is the predominant use, and since it works here, there is no reason to depart from it. A. OEPKE, "*Hoplōn* etc.", *TDNT* V, 294 states categorically that *hōplon* is always used in the NT in the sense of "weapon". *Paristanai* is also capable of a military use, as in the English "Present arms!" See POLYBIUS, *Hist.* III, 72,9: "He set (*parestēse*) the cavalry on both wings" (cited by G. BERTRAM, "*Paristēmi, paristanō*", *TDNT*

The inscriptions on the battle standards described in the scroll have an evocative function which transcends mere description. They are designed to bring into active play the attributes of God which they invoke<sup>(30)</sup>. It is significant for our study, therefore, that one list of inscriptions includes, along with the mottoes "truth of God", "glory of God", and "judgment of God", also the motto "righteousness of God" (1QM 4,6). Here, then, we have the term "righteousness" used in an explicitly military context, and indeed as part of the inscription on a standard, which is very close to being a weapon. We are therefore justified in seeing a connection with Paul's expression "weapons of righteousness", and in suggesting that it is a phrase whose central thought Paul has drawn from knowledge of apocalyptic holy war traditions such as those present in the War Scroll.

If this is true, however, an important consequence results: the genitive in "weapons of righteousness" is to be taken possessively<sup>(31)</sup>. The bodily members, in other words, are weapons belonging to and used by righteousness, and the righteousness being spoken of is the righteousness of God, which comes close to being a hypostasis<sup>(32)</sup>. Paul's Roman addressees are exhorted to "present arms", that is, their bodily members, to God, to be used as weapons of his victorious righteousness<sup>(33)</sup>. In a way that is consonant with

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V, 837). Other NT examples of this military use occur in Matt 26,53 and Acts 23,24.

<sup>(30)</sup> See DUPONT-SOMMER, *Essene Writings*, 174-175, n. 1: "Like the trumpets, the standards possess a mystic significance and efficacy, as the inscriptions to figure on them indicate". *Contra* J. CARMIGNAC, *La Règle de la Guerre des Fils de Lumière contre Les Fils de Ténèbres* (Paris 1958) 45-46, who denies such significance altogether, and Y. YADIN, *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness* (New York 1962) 63-64, 113, who, curiously, ascribes it to the trumpets but not to the standards.

<sup>(31)</sup> *Contra* SCHLIER, *Römerbrief*, 203, who says that the genitives are usually taken as genitives of quality but who seems also to see an objective genitive nuance, and CRANFIELD, *Romans* I, 318, who writes that *adikias* "is not possessive (the possessor is indicated by *tē hamartia*), but a genitive of purpose . . . — 'for the doing of unrighteousness'". *Hamartia*, however, is not a possessive dative but a dative of indirect object.

<sup>(32)</sup> *Contra* BARRETT, *Romans*, 128, who says that *adikia/dikaioynē* are here "used in an ethical sense, not corresponding exactly to Paul's most characteristic use of 'righteousness'". With KÄSEMANN, *Romans*, 177: "One should not stress the dominant ethical factor . . . Paul goes beyond the contrast between good conduct and bad. For him, as the context shows, unrighteousness is ungodliness, while righteousness is the power of God which has come on the scene in Christ . . .".

According to the interpretation advocated here there are two active powers in each of the phrases *hōpla adikias tē hamartia* and *hōpla dikaioynēs tō theō*, namely unrighteousness and sin in the first phrase and righteousness and God in the second phrase. This multiplicity of powers makes perfect sense in an apocalyptic perspective; God and sin, the supreme powers, act through a hierarchy of other powers, including righteousness on the one side and unrighteousness on the other.

<sup>(33)</sup> On the righteousness of God in Paul, see E. KÄSEMANN, "The 'Righteousness of God' in Paul", *New Testament Questions of Today* (Philadelphia 1969) 168-182; M. T. BRAUCH, "Perspectives on 'God's righteousness' in recent German discussion", in E. P. SANDERS, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia

holy war theology, then, God's action has a logical priority over human action, even in the second person imperatives that address human beings in Rom 6,13. Obedient human action does not mean fighting one's own battles, but reporting for active duty to the line of battle where God's power is being unleashed.

A similar but opposite remark can be made about the exhortation in 6,13, "Stop presenting<sup>(34)</sup> your members to Sin as weapons of unrighteousness". Here, too, the genitive *adikias* is to be taken as possessive; the bodily members are weapons used by "unrighteousness", an attribute of personified Sin that is almost a personification in its own right<sup>(35)</sup>. As at Qumran Belial is "the prince of the dominion of ungodliness" (*sr mmšlt rš'h*; 1QM 17,5-6), so for Paul personified Sin extends its power through the active force of unrighteousness<sup>(36)</sup>.

### Conclusion

To conclude, then, by returning to our original problem of translation, the main thoughts of Rom 6,12-14 may be paraphrased as follows:

Let Sin be dethroned in your mortal body! May God vanquish it!  
And you, for your part<sup>(37)</sup>, remove your bodily members from the battle line where they serve Sin as weapons of its unrighteousness, and present them for duty to God as weapons of his righteousness! For Sin will no longer be your master...

The second person imperatives in 6,13 are enclosed in the prayer-like 6,12 and the promise of 6,14<sup>(38)</sup>. The prayer for Sin's overthrow will certainly be heard, as the promise makes clear; indeed, God has already destroyed "the body of Sin" (6,6)<sup>(39)</sup>, and the final destruction of Satan is imminent (16,20).

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1977) 523-542; J. REUMANN, "Righteousness" in the New Testament (Philadelphia - New York 1982) 41-123.

<sup>(34)</sup> On the translation of *mē* + the present imperative, see above, p. 392.

<sup>(35)</sup> Cf. Rom 2,8, where *adikia* is personified: "human beings who obey unrighteousness".

<sup>(36)</sup> The Pauline phrase "weapons of unrighteousness for Sin" could be expressed in Qumran terminology as "weapons of ungodliness for Belial". Cf. Käsemann's comment, quoted above in n. 32, that in 6,13 "unrighteousness is ungodliness". Indeed, the word used for "ungodliness" in 1QM 3,9, *riš'ā*, has a cognate form *reš'a* which the LXX translates with *adikia* in Psalm 44,8(A); Isa 58,6. *Riš'ā* itself is translated in the LXX with *anomia* and *asebeia*, which are closely related to *adikia*; see e.g. the conjunction of *adikia* and *asebeia* in Rom 1,18, and the use of *anomia* in Rom 6,19, where it is personified in a way very similar to the personification of *adikia* a few verses previously in 6,13.

<sup>(37)</sup> These five words represent an attempt to render the *mēde* at the beginning of 6,13 in conjunction with the change of subject from Sin to Paul's addressees.

<sup>(38)</sup> KERTELGE, *Rechtfertigung*, 268 notes that the *gar* in 6,14 grounds the imperatives in 6,12 and 6,13 in the indicative of 6,14.

<sup>(39)</sup> "The body of Sin" is not just an anthropological term but also a cosmic one. It is linked in 6,6 with "our old man", whom the reader of Romans 6

God is on the move against Sin, and the imperatives in 6,13 are exhortations for Paul's hearers to be incorporated into his forward momentum. In the words of C. Blumhardt, "Through prayer we must set ourselves into the return of Jesus Christ, into the history of his coming to the world"<sup>(40)</sup>. Paul does not deny the idea of obedient human action, then, but rather indicates the only context in which it can take place: as part of God's own eschatological battle against the power of cosmic evil.

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would in turn link with the cosmic figure of Adam that has just been described in 5,12-21 (cf. WILCKENS, *Römer* II, 16, on the link between "our old man" and Adam). This cosmic figure has been crucified with Christ, just as in Gal 6,6 the old world has been crucified with him. *To sōma tēs hamartias*, then, refers to the whole cosmic body of Sin, the universal manifestation of Sin's power in its hold over humanity, which indeed concretizes itself in individual human beings ("our old man"), but is not limited to them. Although this "body" has been destroyed, the Pauline dialectic also recognizes a "not yet" element; Satan himself still exists (16,20; cf. 1 Cor 15,24-26).

<sup>(40)</sup> V. ELLER, ed., *Thy Kingdom Come: A Blumhardt Reader* (Grand Rapids 1980) 116.

## L'antithèse de Rm 5-8

L'Épître aux Romains contient un préambule (1,1-15), une annonce du sujet (1,16-17), un développement dogmatique (1,18-11,36), un développement parénétique (12,1-15,13) et un épilogue (15,14-16,27). En 1,16-17, Paul annonce les trois parties de l'exposé dogmatique<sup>(1)</sup>: la justification par la foi (1,18-4,25); la vie des croyants justifiés (5,1-8,39); le salut de tous, Juifs et Grecs, moyennant la foi (9,1-11,36). Chacune des parties comporte deux volets, l'un négatif, l'autre positif. En 1,18-4,25, Paul montre d'abord que tous, Juifs et Grecs, méritent d'être condamnés pour leurs œuvres mauvaises (1,18-3,20); il proclame ensuite que Dieu rend justes ceux qui croient en Lui, à l'exemple d'Abraham le croyant (3,21-4,25). En 5,1-8,39, il décrit d'abord la lutte sévère que doivent mener les croyants contre le Pêché qui cherche à les dominer (5,1-7,25)<sup>(2)</sup>; il annonce ensuite la victoire de l'Esprit présent dans leurs cœurs (8,1-39)<sup>(3)</sup>. En 9,1-11,36, il exprime sa douleur devant le faux-pas d'Israël, qui est resté étranger à la justice de la foi (9,1-10,21); il témoigne ensuite de son espérance en la miséricorde de Dieu, qui conduira un jour tout Israël au salut (11,1-36).

D'autres organisations de l'Épître ont été proposées par de nombreux commentateurs<sup>(4)</sup>. Celle que nous défendons a d'abord été présentée globalement aux lecteurs de *Biblica* dans une étude antérieure<sup>(5)</sup>; nous l'avons ensuite justifiée de manière très détaillée, en examinant de près la structure littéraire du texte<sup>(6)</sup>. Notre intention n'est pas de discuter ici les opinions différentes, mais seulement de montrer à l'aide d'un argument nouveau que les ch. 5-8 de Rm forment bien une unité de pensée, commençant en 5,1, s'achevant en 8,39, où l'on peut observer une parfaite symétrie entre les ch. 5-7 d'une part, le ch. 8 d'autre part.

<sup>(1)</sup> Cette remarque a été faite par J. A. Bengel en 1742. Parmi les modernes, cette division générale est acceptée par A. Crampon (1923), L. Pirot (1939), E. Osty (1945), A. Nygren (1951), O. Michel (1955), C. E. B. Cranfield (1975), H. Schlier (1977), J. M. Cambier (1977).

<sup>(2)</sup> Sur 48 emplois du mot ἀμαρτία dans Rm, 36 se trouvent dans les ch. 5-7.

<sup>(3)</sup> Sur 34 emplois du mot πνεῦμα, 20 se trouvent au ch. 8.

<sup>(4)</sup> On trouvera l'exposé des positions divergentes dans l'article de L. RAMAROSON, «Un 'nouveau plan' de Rm 1,16-11,36», *NRT* 94 (1972) 943-958; dans M. CARREZ, *Lettres de Paul, de Jacques, Pierre et Jude* (Paris 1983) 145-151; dans l'article de A. FEUILLET, «Romains», *DBS* 10 (1985) 762-767.

<sup>(5)</sup> P. ROLLAND, «Il est notre justice, notre vie, notre salut», *Bib* 56 (1975) 394-404.

<sup>(6)</sup> P. ROLLAND, *Épître aux Romains, Texte grec structuré* (Rome 1980).



De cette symétrie, nous avons déjà fourni une preuve tirée de l'examen du vocabulaire. On peut en effet dresser le tableau suivant<sup>(7)</sup>:

5,2 δόξης	8,30 ἐδόξασεν
5,3 θλίψεσιν	8,35 θλίψις
5,4 ὑπομονή	8,25 ὑπομονῆς
5,5 ἐλπίς	8,24 ἐλπίς
5,5 πνεύματος	8,23 πνεῦμα
5,6 ἀσθενῶν	8,26 ἀσθενεία
5,8 ἀγάπην	8,35 ἀγάπης
5,8 Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν	8,34 Χριστὸς ὁ ἀποθανών
5,10 σωθησόμεθα	8,24 ἐσώθημεν
5,14 Ἀδάμ	8,29 πρωτότοκον
5,15 χάρις	8,32 χαρίζεται
5,16 κατάκριμα	8,34 κατακρινῶν
5,19 οἱ πολλοί	8,29 πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς
6,6 συνεσταυρώθη	8,17 συμπάσχομεν
6,8 συζήσομεν	8,17 συνδοξασθῶμεν
6,12 θνητῷ	8,13 θανατοῦτε
6,12 σώματι	8,13 σώματος
6,19 δούλα	8,15 δουλείας
6,20 ἐλεύθεροι	8,21 ἐλευθερίαν
7,5 σαρκί	8,13 σάρκα
7,5 θανάτῳ	8,13 μέλλετε ἀποθνήσκειν
7,8 ἐπιθυμίαν	8,6 φρόνημα
7,14 σάρκινός εἰμι	8,8 ἐν σαρκὶ ὄντες
7,18 οἰκεῖ ἐν ἐμοί	8,9 οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν
7,22 τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ	8,7 τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ
7,25 νόμῳ ἁμαρτίας	8,2 νόμου τῆς ἁμαρτίας

L'argument nouveau qui confirme le précédent s'appuie sur l'examen des sources pauliniennes de l'Épître aux Romains. Il est clair que Paul a repris dans Rm des intuitions qu'il avait déjà exprimées dans ses lettres antérieures. Les ch. 5-8 sont notamment apparentés à 2 Co 4,15-5,18, à 1 Co 15,20-22, à Ga 3,21-4,7 et à Ga 5,16-25. Or, on constate que Paul a repris ces textes deux fois de suite, d'une part dans les ch. 5-7, d'autre part dans le ch. 8, et d'une manière parfaitement symétrique.

Le développement de 2 Co 4,15-5,18, qui oppose la détresse présente du croyant à sa gloire future, est sous-jacent à Rm 5,1-6,11. On le voit facilement dans le tableau suivant:

2 Co	Rm
4,15 χάρις	5,2.15-21; 6,1 χάρις
4,15 πλεονάσασα	5,20; 6,1 πλεονάσῃ
4,15 περισσεύσῃ	5,15 ἐπερίσσευσεν

(7) ROLLAND, *Romains*, 22-31.

4,17	θλίψεως	5,3	θλίψις
4,17	δόξης	5,2	δόξης
5,5	δοὺς ἡμῖν. . . πνεύματος	5,5	πνεύματος δοθέντος ἡμῖν
5,12	καυχήματος	5,2.3.11	καυχώμεθα
5,14	ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ	5,5.8	ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ
5,14	ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν	5,6.8	ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἀπέθανεν
5,14	οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον	5,12	εἰς πάντα ὁ θάνατος
5,18	καταλλάξαντος	5,10	καταλλαγέντες
5,15	μηκέτι ἑαυτοῖς ζῶσιν	6,10.11	ζῶντας τῷ θεῷ
5,15	καὶ ἀποθανόντι	6,3	εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ
5,15	καὶ ἐγερθέντι	6,4	ὥσπερ ἠγέρθη
5,17	τὰ ἀρχαῖα	6,6	παλαιός
5,17	τὰ καινὰ	6,4	καινότητι

Mais ce même texte a également inspiré la fin du ch. 8. Voici la liste des correspondances:

2 Co	Rm	
4,15	8,32	χαρίζεται
4,17	8,35	θλίψις
4,17	8,30	ἐδόξασεν
4,18	8,24-25	οὐ βλέπομεν
5,2.4	8,23.26	στενάζομεν
5,5	8,23	τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος
5,14	8,35.39	τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Χριστοῦ
5,14	8,32	ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πάντων παρέδωκεν αὐτόν
5,17	8,19-22	κτίσις

Tout se passe comme si Paul avait dédoublé le texte de 2 Co, utilisant au début de son exposé les thèmes évoquant la lutte entre la mort et la résurrection, et réservant pour la fin la description de la vie du croyant dans l'Esprit.

La même observation peut être faite pour le second texte que nous avons cité: 1 Co 15,20-22. En Rm 5,12-17, Paul reprend l'antithèse entre le premier homme, par qui est arrivée la mort, et le Christ, par qui nous vient la vie. Mais il réserve pour la fin du ch. 8 le titre de «premier-né (d'entre les morts)» (πρωτότοκον: 8,29), qui correspond à «prémices de ceux qui se sont endormis» (ἀπαρχὴ τῶν κεκοιμημένων) en 1 Co 15,20.

A partir du ch. 6, la source principale de l'inspiration de Paul se trouve dans l'Épître aux Galates. Le premier texte qu'il reprend est une description des effets du baptême, en Ga 3,21-4,7: nous sommes soustraits à l'esclavage de la Loi, nous expérimentons la liberté des Fils de Dieu. Faisons donc l'inventaire des contacts entre ce passage de Ga et Rm 6,1-7,6:

Ga		Rm	
3,27	εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε	6,3	ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν
4,3	δεδουλωμένοι	6,6.16-22	δουλεύειν
4,5	ὑπὸ νόμον	6,14.15	ὑπὸ νόμον
4,5	ἐξαγοράση	7,2.5	κατηργήθημεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου

Traitant du baptême, Paul a donc exploité au ch. 6 et au début du ch. 7 le thème de la libération de l'esclavage du Péché et de la Loi. Mais il a réservé pour le ch. 8 la description de la filiation adoptive :

Ga		Rm	
3,23	τὴν μέλλουσιν... ἀποκαλυφθῆναι	8,18	τὴν μέλλουσιν... ἀποκαλυφθῆναι
3,26	υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἔστε	8,14.19	υἱοὶ θεοῦ εἰσιν
4,5	υἰοθεσίαν	8,15.23	υἰοθεσίας
4,6	τὸ πνεῦμα κρᾶζον	8,15	τὸ πνεῦμα κρᾶζομεν
	Ἀββὰ ὁ πατήρ		Ἀββὰ ὁ πατήρ
4,7	κληρονόμος	8,17	κληρονόμοι

La dernière source d'inspiration de Paul se trouve dans la suite de l'Épître aux Galates, dans le passage où l'Apôtre évoque l'antagonisme entre la chair et l'Esprit (Ga 5,16-25). Que ce texte soit utilisé dès le ch. 7, c'est ce que montrent quatre importants contacts de vocabulaire :

Ga		Rm	
5,16.17	ἐπιθυμίαν ἐπιθυμεῖ	7,7.8	ἐπιθυμίαν ἐπιθυμήσεις
5,17	ἀντίκειται	7,23	ἀντιστρατευόμενον
5,17	μὴ ἂν θέλητε ταῦτα ποιῆτε	7,15.19	οὐ γὰρ ὁ θέλω τοῦτο πράσσω
5,22	ὁ δὲ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος	7,4	ἵνα καρποφορήσωμεν τῷ θεῷ

Mais les analogies sont aussi grandes avec le début du ch. 8 :

Ga		Rm	
5,16	πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε	8,4	τοῖς περιπατοῦσιν κατὰ πνεῦμα
5,17	σὰρξ, πνεῦμα	8,5-9	κατὰ σάρκα, κατὰ πνεῦμα
5,20	ἔχθραι	8,7	ἔχθρα
5,22	εἰρήνη	8,6	εἰρήνη
5,25	εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι	8,10	τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωή
5,18	εἰ δὲ πνεύματι ἄγεσθε	8,14	πνεύματι ἄγονται

L'antithèse entre la Loi du Pêché et la Loi de l'Esprit (Rm 8,2) constitue donc le centre du développement de Rm 5-8.

Ces diverses observations confirment la structure de Rm 5-8 que nous avons précédemment mise en valeur par des considérations purement littéraires<sup>(8)</sup>. Mais elles nous permettent aussi de mieux exprimer, d'un autre point de vue, la dynamique de la pensée de Paul dans cette deuxième partie de l'Epître:

#### I - Le dur enfantement de la création nouvelle (5,1-7,25)

- A) 5,1-21 L'œuvre de réconciliation du Christ arrache l'humanité pécheresse à la mort universelle (cf. 2 Co 4,15-5,18; 1 Co 15,20-22)
- B) 6,1-7,6 Le baptême nous engage dans une démarche de libération par rapport au péché dont la Loi est l'instrument (cf. Ga 3,21-4,7)
- C) 7,7-25 Dans mon être intime, j'expérimente le déchirement entre les aspirations de ma pensée et la captivité où me tient la chair (cf. Ga 5,16-25)

#### II - L'expérience joyeuse de la vie dans l'Esprit (8,1-39)

- C') 8,1-11 Si nous avons l'Esprit du Christ, nous ne marchons plus selon la chair, mais selon l'Esprit (cf. Ga 5,16-25)
- B') 8,12-21 Nous ne vivons plus dans la servitude, mais dans la liberté spirituelle des Fils de Dieu (cf. Ga 3,21-4,7)
- A') 8,22-39 Possédant les prémices de l'Esprit, gémissant, mais remplis d'espérance, nous nous confions dans l'intercession du Christ pour tous ses frères (cf. 2 Co 4,15-5,18; 1 Co 15,20-22).

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(8) ROLLAND, *Romains*, 22-31.

## Examen crítico de Mt 19,24

En el capítulo 19 de Mt, el joven rechaza la invitación a la perfección por el apego a las riquezas. Esto justifica que Jesús, en el v. 24, insista en recordar el peligro inherente a un amor desconsiderado a los bienes de la tierra. Por esto, dice: πάλιν δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν, εὐκοπώτερόν ἐστιν κάμηλον διὰ τρυπήματος ῥαφίδος διελθεῖν ἢ πλούσιον εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ.

Cuatro son las variantes<sup>(1)</sup> que pretendemos considerar y que vamos a disponer separadamente, con la obvia atención a las lecturas de los lugares paralelos.

### Mt 19,24

τρυπηματος: variante general

τρυμαλιας: C K M U Θ Σ Φ 4 124 273 544 565 700 945 1170 1223  
1515 pc

τρηματος: κ\* B

### Mc 10,25

τρυπηματος: f13

τρυμαλιας: variante general

τρηματος: κ\*

τρυμαλιδος: D

### Lc 18,25

τρυπηματος: L R Θ 22<sup>e</sup> 157 242 1241 f31 f32 f150

τρυμαλιας: variante general

τρηματος: κ B D 49

Vista la atestación documental, conviene ahora atender a las variantes preferidas en las ediciones críticas. En Mt trece leen τρυπηματος<sup>(2)</sup> y cinco,

<sup>(1)</sup> Variantes no incluidas en la obra de B. M. METZGER, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London - New York 1975). Con referencia a este versículo mateano, solamente en la p. 50 se discute la alternancia καμηλον / καμιλον.

<sup>(2)</sup> ALAND-BLACK-MARTINI-METZGER-WIKGREN<sup>3</sup>, BOVER-O'CALLAGHAN, BRANSCHIED<sup>3</sup>, HODGES-FARSTAD, LAGRANGE, MERK<sup>9</sup>, NESTLE-ALAND<sup>26</sup>, SCRIVENER<sup>(r1908)</sup>, SOUTER<sup>2 (r1950)</sup>, TISCHENDORF<sup>8</sup>, VOGELS<sup>2</sup>, VON SODEN, (WESTCOTT-HORT<sup>ms</sup>), SYNHUCK-GREEVEN<sup>13</sup>.

τρηματος<sup>(3)</sup>. En Mc la totalidad escoge τρυμαλιας<sup>(4)</sup>, mientras que en Lc quince aducen τρηματος<sup>(5)</sup> y dos τρυμαλιας<sup>(6)</sup>.

En cuanto a la discusión de las variantes, el caso es muy complejo. En Mc la lección auténtica es τρυμαλιας, con razón preferida por los críticos. Merecen notarse la variante solitaria de D y la peculiar de κ\*. Estas singularidades restan autoridad a κ y D en este pasaje. En Mt τρυμαλιας armoniza con Mc y Lc. Esta armonización es propia de los cesarienses y afines. Queda, pues, la disputa entre τρυπηματος y τρηματος. Por dos razones es preferible la primera. Τρυπηματος apenas aparece en Mc y Lc, y esto por armonización con Mt. La razón de leer τρυπηματος la generalidad de los códices no puede ser sino su autenticidad. Además, la documentación de τρηματος, sobre ser escasa, es sospechosa. κ tiene la misma variante (erradamente) en Mc y en Lc; B tiene también en Lc la misma variante, y en este contexto no es de fiar (cf. χρηματα por κτηματα en Mt 19,22).

En Lc se disputan τρυμαλιας y τρηματος. Por de pronto, no tiene aquí cabida la armonización; pues si los antioquenos leen τρυμαλιας en Mc y en Lc, también κ B leen inqualmente τρηματος en Mt y en Lc. Desde este punto de vista están en idénticas condiciones. Esto supuesto, la documentación de τρηματος, además de escasa, es también sospechosa por lo notado anteriormente. En estas condiciones, llama un poco la atención la preferencia de los críticos modernos por τρηματος. Se diría que en última instancia habrá sido decisivo el influyente — por más que numéricamente escaso — peso de los testigos.

El caso de Θ en Lc es revelador: yuxtapone dos variantes, mutilando la segunda: τρυπηματος βελονης μαλιας ραφιδος. Se ve que el imperito copista acopló las variantes de dos manuscritos diferentes, sin entender lo que copiaba.

La segunda variante que hemos de estudiar es διελθειν, cuya atestación documental es como sigue:

#### Mt 19,24

διελθειν: B D G S V X Y Γ Θ Ω 22 118 124 209 565 700 pler lat sy<sup>s</sup>  
sa arm Hil

εισελθειν: κ C E F H K L M U (W) Z Δ Σ Φ 1 f13 (exc 124) 28 33  
71 157 229 238 482 489 517 543 544 692 892 1010 1012 1241  
1424 1588 pc sy<sup>spth</sup> bo aeth Or

#### Mc 10,25

διελθειν: B C (D) K Π f1 f13 (exc 69) 543 700 892 1071 aur b c d f  
ff<sup>2</sup> l q r<sup>1</sup> vg sy<sup>h</sup> bo arm aeth

εισελθειν: variante general

(3) LEGG, TASKER, WEISS<sup>2</sup>, WESTCOTT-HORT, *SynALAND*<sup>7</sup>.

(4) Los expresados en las dos notas precedentes.

(5) ALAND-BLACK-MARTINI-METZGER-WIKGREN<sup>3</sup>, BOVER-O'CALLAGHAN, BRANSCHIED<sup>3</sup>, LAGRANGE, MERK<sup>9</sup>, NESTLE-ALAND<sup>26</sup>, SOUTER<sup>2</sup> (r1950), TASKER, TISCHENDORF<sup>8</sup>, VOGELS<sup>2</sup>, VON SODEN, WEISS<sup>2</sup>, WESTCOTT-HORT, *SynALAND*<sup>7</sup>, *Syn-HUCK-GREEVEN*<sup>13</sup>.

(6) HODGES-FARSTAD, SCRIVENER<sup>(r1908)</sup>.

*Lc 18,25*

διελθειν: A D M P Θ 0211 f1 f13 27 205 343 348 472 475 713 726  
 827 903 954 1071 1195 1220 1229 1458 1510 1654 2542 2766  
 1547 pc sy<sup>ch</sup> sa  
 εισελθειν: variante general

Las ediciones críticas que en Mt escogen διελθειν son nueve<sup>(7)</sup>, mientras que otras nueve<sup>(8)</sup> prefieren εισελθειν. En Mc todas, menos una, adoptan εισελθειν<sup>(9)</sup>, y en Lc todas se deciden por εισελθειν.

Caso particularmente difícil. La misma división, por partes iguales, de los críticos lo confirma. En los tres evangelistas fluctúan las dos variantes rivales, con excisión interna de todas las recensiones. La documentación se contrapesa. Ni cabe apelar a la posible armonización con los textos paralelos, tan admisible en un sentido como en otro. Favorece a εισελθειν el ser más ardua. Pero podría ser una adaptación al εισελουσεται del versículo precedente. Tal vez la variante siguiente pueda dar alguna mayor luz.

*Mt 19,24*

+ εισελθειν post ουρανων (o θεου): variante general  
 + εισελθειν post πλουσιον: B D Θ 124 700 lat (exc ff<sup>1</sup>) sy<sup>ph</sup> sa bo  
 om: κ Z f1 33 565 892 pc ff<sup>1</sup> sy<sup>ci</sup> bo<sup>ms</sup>

*Mc 10,25*

+ εισελθειν post θεου: variante general  
 + εισελθειν post πλουσιον: 28 aur b c f l vg sy  
 om: D Θ 579 1241 k a d ff<sup>2</sup> sy<sup>cl</sup> Cl

*Lc 18,25*

+ εισελθειν post θεου: variante general  
 + εισελθειν post πλουσιον: D aur b c d f vg Ambr Aug  
 om: Ψ 579 e a ff<sup>2</sup> i sy<sup>op</sup> Chr Cyr

En Mt los críticos han expresado así sus preferencias: tres tienen εισελθειν post θεου<sup>(10)</sup>; seis, a su vez, post πλουσιον<sup>(11)</sup>; y nueve omiten el segundo verbo y solamente tienen una vez εισελθειν<sup>(12)</sup>. En Mc todos los críticos admiten εισελθειν post θεου<sup>(13)</sup> y en Lc todos lo tienen también post θεου<sup>(14)</sup>.

(7) ALAND-BLACK-MARTINI-METZGER-WIKGREN<sup>3</sup>, BOVER-O'CALLAGHAN, BRANSCHIED<sup>3</sup>, HODGES-FARSTAD, NESTLE-ALAND<sup>26</sup>, SCRIVENER<sup>(r1908)</sup>, SOUTER<sup>2 (r1950)</sup>, TASKER, WEISS<sup>2</sup>, (WESTCOTT-HORT<sup>ms</sup>).

(8) LAGRANGE, LEGG, MERK<sup>9</sup>, TISCHENDORF<sup>8</sup>, VOGELS<sup>2</sup>, VON SODEN, WESTCOTT-HORT, SynALAND<sup>7</sup>, SynHUCK-GREEVEN<sup>13</sup>.

(9) Las de las notas 7 y 8. La excepción es HODGES-FARSTAD.

(10) HODGES-FARSTAD, SCRIVENER<sup>(r1908)</sup>, SOUTER<sup>2 (r1950)</sup>.

(11) ALAND-BLACK-MARTINI-METZGER-WIKGREN<sup>3</sup>, BOVER-O'CALLAGHAN, BRANSCHIED<sup>3</sup>, NESTLE-ALAND<sup>26</sup>, TASKER, WEISS<sup>2</sup>, (WESTCOTT-HORT<sup>ms</sup>).

(12) LAGRANGE, LEGG, MERK<sup>9</sup>, TISCHENDORF<sup>8</sup>, VOGELS<sup>2</sup>, VON SODEN, WESTCOTT-HORT, SynALAND<sup>7</sup>, SynHUCK-GREEVEN<sup>13</sup>.

(13) Los de las notas 10, 11 y 12.

(14) Como en la precedente, con la obvia omisión de LEGG.

Tal vez convenga ahora discutir racionalmente la variante preferible. Para ello, consideremos esta última lectura en función de la precedente. La combinación resultante más ruda parece ser: ευκοπωτερον εστιν καμηλον δια τρυπηματος ραφιδος εισελθειν η πλουσιον εις την βασιλειαν του θεου (ο των ουρανων) εισελθειν.

Esta rudeza se templó de diversos modos: o trasladando εισελθειν después de πλουσιον, o suprimiéndolo, o cambiando el primer εισελθειν en διελθειν, o de varias maneras a la vez. La combinación más tosca, que en Lc admiten todos los críticos, seguramente por estar testimoniada por  $\times$  B, parece igualmente que debería prevalecer en Mt y Mc. Esto, consiguientemente, abogaría en favor del reiterado εισελθειν, avalado también por los antioqueños, los cuales ponen de manifiesto que no siempre pulen la frase para darle mayor elegancia.

Pasemos finalmente a la cuarta variante:

*Mt 19,24*

του θεου: variante general

των ουρανων: Z fl 33 124 157 pc lat (exc d) sy<sup>c</sup> Or

*Mc 10,25*

του θεου: variante general

των ουρανων: 579 sy<sup>a</sup>

*Lc 18,25*

του θεου: variante general

των ουρανων: 265 1859 11074 Chr Aug

En Mt quince ediciones críticas<sup>(15)</sup> leen του θεου, mientras tres<sup>(16)</sup> adoptan των ουρανων. En Mc y Lc todos los críticos escogen la variante του θεου<sup>(17)</sup>.

En Mt la expresión βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, además de 19,24, ocurre otras treinta y tres veces<sup>(18)</sup>, mientras que βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (ordinaria y exclusiva de los otros evangelistas), sólo tres veces (12,28; 21,31.43), notando que en 12,28 no hay variantes; en 21,31, prácticamente tampoco (según Legg, των ουρανων: 13 1184 *semel* sy<sup>p(1 ms)</sup> sa<sup>(1 ms)</sup> arm Hipp); y en 21,43 no pueden aducirse variantes. Por tanto, aparte la escasa documentación a favor de των ουρανων, apoya la lectura του θεου la disonancia con el modo peculiar del estilo mateano. La variante των ουρανων fácilmente podría ser una adaptación al uso característico de Mt.

Evidentemente que de la consideración de una variante neotestamentaria no se pueden deducir especiales consecuencias. Sólo lo permiten trabajos de

<sup>(15)</sup> ALAND-BLACK-MARTINI-METZGER-WIKGREN<sup>3</sup>, BOVER-O'CALLAGHAN, HODGES-FARSTAD, LEGG, MERK<sup>2</sup>, NESTLE-ALAND<sup>26</sup>, SCRIVENER<sup>(r1908)</sup>, SOUTER<sup>2 (r1950)</sup>, TASKER, VOGELS<sup>2</sup>, VON SODEN, WEISS<sup>2</sup>, WESTCOTT-HÖRT, *Syn*ALAND<sup>7</sup>, *Syn*HUCK-GREEVEN<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>(16)</sup> BRANSCHIED<sup>3</sup>, LAGRANGE, TISCHENDORF<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>(17)</sup> Los citados en las notas precedentes.

<sup>(18)</sup> 3,2; 4,17; 5,3.10.19<sup>2</sup>.20; 7,21<sup>2</sup>; 8,11; 10,7; 11,11.12; 13,11.24.31.33.44.45.47.52; 16,19; 18,1.3.4.23; 19,12.14.23; 20,1; 22,2; 23,13; 25,1.



largo alcance con un número adecuado — que necesariamente ha de ser exhaustivo — de casos estudiados. Sin embargo, en esta nota es interesante advertir la dificultad en la selección de alguna variante por la misma dispersión de testimonios, lo cual se refleja en las actuales ediciones críticas. Se diría reveladora la extraña lectura del Koridethi en Lc 18,25, la inseguridad textual que se detecta en el Sinaitico y Vaticano. Y finalmente, la variante εἰσελθεῖν que, a pesar de dar lugar a una combinación más ruda, está testimoniada también por los antioquenos, lo cual parece que va contra su fisonomía textual, a la que generalmente se atribuye cierta propensión a la elegancia.

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## Jehoseph in Ps 81,6

For anyone remotely acquainted with the Hebrew Bible, the name Joseph has a familiar ring to it. Borne predominantly by the son of Jacob who, according to biblical tradition, rose to a position of fame and power in Egypt, it occurs over two hundred times, without any variation in the spelling *yô-sēp*<sup>(1)</sup>. The same consistency in spelling is maintained with respect to four other individuals who bore the name: a man of Issachar (Num 13,7); a son of Asaph (1 Chr 25,2,9); one of those who took a foreign wife (Ezra 10,42) and a priest (Neh 12,14).

The analysis and meaning of the name are relatively straightforward. It may be parsed as a Hiphil imperfect<sup>(2)</sup> from the root *\*yṣp* "to add", with the meaning "(DN) has added (another child to the family)". Like several other names borne by the patriarchs (e.g., Isaac and Jacob), this understanding assumes that Joseph is a verbal-sentence name with an unexpressed subject, namely, the deity. Inasmuch as personal names among the patriarchs include several compounded with El but none with Yahweh<sup>(3)</sup>, we may reconstruct the full form of the name as *\*yawsipu-'ilu* or the like with a different theophore. This structural analysis of the name finds confirmation in *yôsiṣyāh* (Ezra 8,10), a full form of the name attested in the postexilic period.

Against the backdrop of the uniformity in the spelling *yô-sēp*, the expanded form of the name in Ps 81,6 stands out in sharp relief: "He established it for a testimony in Jehoseph (*bîhôsēp*), when he went throughout the land of Egypt" (NASB). Variation in the spelling of personal names knows many examples in the Hebrew Bible. Especially instructive is the case of Jona-

<sup>(1)</sup> A. EVEN-SHOSHAN, *A New Concordance of the Old Testament* (Jerusalem 1985) 459-460.

<sup>(2)</sup> I assume the Hebrew imperfect has a preterite function in this name, notwithstanding the etiology of Gen 30,24, where the name is interpreted as a jussive. See J. J. STAMM, "Hebräische Ersatznamen", *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday, April 1965* (AS 16; Chicago 1965) 414-415 (reprinted in *Beiträge zur hebräischen und altorientalischen Namenkunde* [eds. E. JENNI and M. A. KLOPFENSTEIN] [OBO 30; Fribourg - Göttingen 1980] 62-63). On the preterite function of the imperfect, see E. E. KNUDSEN, "An Analysis of Amorite", *JCS* 34 (1982) 8, n. 23 and the bibliography cited there. The proposal of E. C. B. MACLAURIN, "Joseph and Asaph", *VT* 25 (1975) 35, n. 8, that Joseph is to be analyzed as a qal participle, overlooks the fact that names containing a participle are scarce in the biblical onomasticon.

<sup>(3)</sup> As duly noted by G. J. WENHAM, "The Religion of the Patriarchs", *Essays on the Patriarchal Narratives* (eds. A. R. MILLARD and D. J. WISEMAN) (Winona Lake, IN 1980) 190. On the basis of the Hebrew Bible and extrabiblical sources, names with Yahwistic theophores are relatively late.

dab/Jehonadab (2 Sam 3,3,5), in which the two forms of the name refer to the same individual. The case of Joseph/Jehoseph, however, is strikingly different, in that 1) the ratio between the two forms of the name is so disproportionate (210:1), and 2) the expanded form of the name is an isolated occurrence confined to the book of Psalms. Although the spelling Jehoseph in Ps 81,6 is a *hapax legomenon* in the Hebrew Bible, one should mention that this spelling occurs frequently in postbiblical inscriptions dated to the period c. 200 B.C.-A.D. 200. More specifically, this spelling is commonly found in non-literary texts of various kinds—ossuary inscriptions, letters, lists of persons, a writ of divorce and assorted contracts concerning rent, marriage, or the sale of land. Many of these occurrences are found in Palestinian Aramaic texts; the longer form of the name is found in some Hebrew texts as well<sup>(4)</sup>.

Scholars have offered several proposals to account for the expanded form of the name with *h*. It is the purpose of this short note to catalog the suggestions which have been made and to evaluate them. In light of the frequent occurrence of the spelling *yhwsp* in the above-mentioned texts, the elimination of the bothersome *h* by textual emendation can no longer be considered as a legitimate option<sup>(5)</sup>. There remains to consider the theories which accept the reading of the MT as genuine and seek to explain the presence of the *h* in the name. In our survey of relevant literature, we have encountered three different explanations for the spelling Jehoseph. Two of these have been around for some time; the third is of recent origin. We will begin by considering the most recent proposal.

In an enlightening and provocative study of Ps 81,6, P. A. H. de Boer has proposed that the unique spelling of the name was “intentionally manufactured” to point toward an alternate reading, namely Jehudah instead of Joseph<sup>(6)</sup>. That is, the spelling Jehoseph indicated Judean opposition to that circle of believers who yearned for the restoration of the House of Joseph. This explanation assumes, therefore, that either the writer of the Psalm or a late redactor, who possessed Judean loyalties, constructed an artificial form of the name to express his opposition to the restoration of the House of Joseph.

<sup>(4)</sup> For a list of the occurrences of the name in Palestinian Aramaic texts, see J. A. FITZMYER and D. J. HARRINGTON, *A Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts* (BibOr 34; Rome 1978) 343; for the Hebrew texts, see P. BENOIT et al., *Les grottes de Murabba'at* (DJD 2; Oxford 1961) 297. Admittedly, a degree of overlap exists between these two sources. Note also that the expanded form of the name has recently been found on an Aramaic ostrakon from Gezer. See J. ROSENBAUM and J. D. SEGER, “Three Unpublished Ostraca from Gezer”, *BASOR* 264 (1986) 56-57. Hebrew names can, of course, appear in Aramaic texts, and vice versa.

<sup>(5)</sup> See T. K. CHEYNE, “Old Testament Notes”, *JBL* 18 (1899) 211, who sought to dispose of the unique spelling through emendation: MT *bîhôsêp šâmô* > \**b'yôsêp hišmîa'*.

<sup>(6)</sup> P. A. H. DE BOER, “Psalm 81.6a: Observations on Translation and Meaning of One Hebrew Line”, *In the Shelter of Elyon: Essays on Ancient Palestinian Life and Literature in Honor of G. W. Ahlström* (JSOTSup 31; Sheffield 1984) 77.

De Boer's study has certainly advanced our understanding of this verse, but his proposal on the name Jehoseph fails to take into account the frequent occurrence of the name with this spelling in postbiblical inscriptions. If de Boer's theory were valid, one would expect to find this unique spelling confined to Ps 81,6, or later references which ultimately could be traced back to the biblical verse. On the contrary, the name appears to be borne by any number of individuals mentioned in postbiblical texts, and there is not the slightest reason to suppose that the spelling Jehoseph in these instances either derives from Ps 81,6, or is artificially manufactured to express Judean opposition.

Having set aside de Boer's view, we are left with two remaining theories which seek to explain the expanded form of the name. The first theory is that the spelling Jehoseph is to be analyzed as an uncontracted form of the Hiphil imperfect<sup>(7)</sup>. Whereas the *h* of the Hiphil imperfect is regularly elided in Hebrew, there are a number of isolated imperfect verbal forms in the Hebrew Bible in which the *h* is retained. In support of this interpretation, one may recall that proper names are linguistic isolates and thus exhibit a marked tendency to retain the archaic features of a language<sup>(8)</sup>. Without any discussion of the unique spelling of the name, several commentators on the Psalms<sup>(9)</sup> content themselves to refer the reader to GKC § 53q. Upon consulting this paragraph, one finds a listing of eight Hiphil imperfect verbal forms which retain the *h*, and in addition to the pair of names *y'hôšēp/yôšēp*, the pair *y'hûkal/yûkal* (Jer 37,3; 38,1). This latter pair allegedly exhibits the same alternation between uncontracted and contracted forms as the former pair of names.

At first glance, this theory is an adequate account of the unique spelling Jehoseph. Upon reflection, however, several objections come to mind, the combined force of which render the theory untenable. First, this explanation of the name fails to account for the chronological distribution of the spellings Joseph and Jehoseph. It seems quite unlikely that an archaic form of the name would appear only in a passage which is, relatively speaking, late (Ps 81,6), and also that this form would become commonplace in postbiblical

(7) O. T. ALLIS, "The Name Joseph", *Princeton Theological Review* 18 (1920) 650, n. 15; M. D. CASSUTO, in *Enšîqlôpedyâ Miqrâ'it*, vol. 3, s.v. "yôšēp", col. 613; S. R. DRIVER, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel*, 2d ed., rev. and enl. (Oxford 1960) 147; H. EWALD, *Ausführliches Lehrbuch der hebräischen Sprache des Alten Bundes* (Göttingen 1870) § 192d; M. JASTROW, Jr., "Hebrew Proper Names compounded with *yh* and *yhw*", *JBL* 13 (1894) 120.

(8) For a general discussion of language, proper nouns and archaism, with specific examples of archaism from Semitic proper names, see my "Archaic Features of Canaanite Personal Names in the Hebrew Bible" (Ph.D. dissertation; University of Chicago, 1987) 1-15. As will become evident below, I do not consider the retention of *h* in the Hiphil imperfect a valid example of archaism.

(9) E.g., F. BAETHGEN, *Die Psalmen* (HKAT II/2; Göttingen 1904) 254; C. A. BRIGGS, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (ICC; Edinburgh 1907) II, 214; B. DUHM, *Die Psalmen*, 2d, enl. and rev. ed. (Kurzer HKAT XIV; Tübingen 1922) 315.

inscriptions. Second, the name *y<sup>h</sup>ūkāl* is probably the result of contraction after the disappearance of intervocalic *y* (*\*yahūyūkāl* > *\*yahūkāl* > *y<sup>h</sup>ūkāl*), and thus may be a Yahwistic name<sup>(10)</sup>; in any event, this form of the name is too problematic to cite as an instance of the retention of the *h* of the Hiphil imperfect<sup>(11)</sup>. In fact, with the possible exception of Jehudah<sup>(12)</sup>, proper names provide no evidence for the retention of the *h* in the Hiphil imperfect.

Furthermore, it seems unlikely that the Hiphil imperfects retaining the *h* (cited in GKC 53q) are actually genuine archaic forms. Rather than being confined to passages which are unanimously considered early (e.g., Gen 49 and Judg 5), the forms are found in poetry and prose alike, and, as Driver has noted, nearly all of them occur in books or passages which are late. The possibility that most of these forms may be hypercorrections due to Aramaic influence cannot be ruled out entirely<sup>(13)</sup>. This analysis gains credibility when it is recalled that the prefix conjugation verbal forms of the causative stem from the Amarna letters already evidence the syncope of the *h*<sup>(14)</sup>. If the *h* of the causative stem had already elided in the prefix conjugation in Old Canaanite<sup>(15)</sup>, then the occurrence of the *h* in those imperfect verbal

<sup>(10)</sup> So R. B. LAWTON, Jr., "Israelite Personal Names on Hebrew Inscriptions Antedating 500 B.C.E." (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1977) 60. For a list of Israelite names found in pre-exilic Hebrew inscriptions, consult his "Israelite Personal Names on Pre-Exilic Hebrew Inscriptions", *Bib* 65 (1984) 330-346.

<sup>(11)</sup> The LXX transliteration Ιωαχαλ suggests the name be revocalized *\*y<sup>h</sup>hōyākōl* (H. L. GILBERT, "A Study in Old Testament Names", *Hebraica* 11 [1894-95] 215, n. 4). However that may be, the *h* appears to be part of a Yahwistic theophore and not that of the Hiphil stem.

<sup>(12)</sup> See the discussion of A. R. MILLARD, "The Meaning of the Name Judah", *ZAW* 86 (1974) 216-218, who, following Albright's lead, interpreted this name as a Hophal jussive of the root *\*ydh*, with the meaning "may (DN) be praised". Contrast E. LIPiŃSKI, "L'étymologie de 'Juda'", *VT* 23 (1973) 380-381, who explained this name as a *\*qatūl* base noun derived from the same root as Arabic *wahda* "ravin, gorge". For further bibliography and discussion, see H.-J. ZOBEL, "*y<sup>h</sup>ūdāh*", *TDOT* 5, 482-484.

<sup>(13)</sup> In the earlier phases of Aramaic, known as Old (925-700 B.C.) and Official Aramaic (700-200 B.C.) according to Fitzmyer's classification scheme (J. A. FITZMYER, "The Phases of the Aramaic Language", *A Wandering Aramean: Collected Aramaic Essays* [SBLMS 25; Chico, CA 1979] 57-84), most of the dialects retain the *h* prefix in Haphel imperfect verbal forms. In the phase known as Middle Aramaic (200 B.C.-A.D. 200), the *h* prefix is, for the most part, no longer found in the causative conjugation. Therefore, we may suppose that the Aramaic influence would have come from Aramaic dialects of the Old or Official Aramaic phases. Unfortunately, our knowledge of specific dialects is too fragmentary to allow us to specify the particular dialect(s) which may have led to the formation of imperfect verbal forms with *h* in the Hebrew Bible.

<sup>(14)</sup> D. SIVAN, *Grammatical Analysis and Glossary of the Northwest Semitic Vocables in Akkadian Texts of the 15th-13th C.B.C. from Canaan and Syria* (AOAT 214; Kevelaer - Neukirchen-Vluyn 1984) 175-176.

<sup>(15)</sup> For what it is worth, we may add the evidence of the Amorite dialects. Assuming that Amorite had an *h* causative, there is no evidence for the retention of the *h* in the prefix conjugation (I. J. GELB, "La lingua degli Amoriti", *RANL* 13 [1958] §§ 2.3.15, 3.3.7.6.1, 3.3.8.1.5).

forms in the Hebrew Bible can no longer be considered a retention, but an innovation.

The second and final theory to be considered is that the name Yehoseph was formed according to the analogy of other names beginning with theophoric *yô-*. That is, the initial *yô-* of Joseph was reanalyzed as a theophoric element and the absurd form *y<sup>h</sup>ôšēp* was produced. In addition to modern commentators who affirm this hypothesis<sup>(16)</sup>, we may note that in the Midrash on Ps 81,6, the initial element of Jehoseph is interpreted as a Yahwistic theophore, testifying to the moral rectitude of Joseph for not touching Potiphar's wife<sup>(17)</sup>. The phenomenon of reanalysis, in which names are reinterpreted, often in ways which violate the principles of modern philology, needs no introduction. This phenomenon finds its most poignant expression in the etiological narratives of the Hebrew Bible, not to mention instances in which the biblical writers or their sources expand or reinterpret names from earlier periods<sup>(18)</sup>. An especially appropriate parallel to Joseph – Jehoseph is that of Hosea – Jehoshua (on the latter pair, see Num 13,18). In both cases a neutral personal name has been altered into a Yahwistic one<sup>(19)</sup>.

Only this last theory is able to explain the chronological distribution of the form Yehoseph. According to Milik, the archaizing writing *yhw-* was introduced in the Hasmonean period, and it became so widespread that it is almost the only writing found in the onomasticon of the ossuaries<sup>(20)</sup>. Here we may add that in the other non-literary texts examined for this study, the name Jehoseph seems to have almost entirely displaced the name Joseph<sup>(21)</sup>. Yet in classical postbiblical Jewish literature (the Mishnah, Talmudim and Midrashim), while the name Joseph and various hypocoristica<sup>(22)</sup> therefrom

<sup>(16)</sup> W. F. ALBRIGHT, "Contributions to Biblical Archaeology and Philology", *JBL* 43 (1924) 374; IDEM, "Further Observations on the Name Yahweh and Its Modifications in Proper Names", *JBL* 44 (1925) 158; G. B. GRAY, *Studies in Hebrew Proper Names* (London 1896) 154, n. 1; M. NOTH, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* (BWANT III, 10; reprint ed.: Hildesheim – New York 1980) 107, n. 1; J. J. S. PEROWNE, *The Book of Psalms* (reprint ed., Grand Rapids 1966) II, 95.

<sup>(17)</sup> For an English translation, see W. G. BRAUDE, *The Midrash on Psalms* (Yale Judaica Series XIII; New Haven 1959) II, 57. For the same explanation of the form Jehoseph, see Midr. Rab. on Lev 23,10. Other explanations are also found in the Midrashim (e.g., Midr. Rab. on Num. 7,49).

<sup>(18)</sup> On the longer form of the name Hezekiah, which begins with *y*, see E. Y. KUTSCHER, *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll (1 Q Isa<sup>a</sup>)* (STDJ VI; Leiden 1974) 104-106, where he notes that the forms beginning with *y* are found almost entirely in Chronicles. In 2 Sam 2,8(2).10.12.15; 3,8.14.15; 4,5.8.12, the initial element of the name 'ešba'al is (re-)interpreted as 'iš "man".

<sup>(19)</sup> I plan to treat the change from Hosea to Jehoshua in a forthcoming study. For the meantime, see "Renaming in the Old Testament", *Words and Meanings* (FS. D. W. Thomas; [eds. P. R. ACKROYD and B. LINDARS] Cambridge 1968) 77.

<sup>(20)</sup> J. T. MILIK, "Textes hébreux et araméens", in BENOIT, *Les grottes de Murabba'at*, 100.

<sup>(21)</sup> See n. 4 above for references.

<sup>(22)</sup> *yôšē*; *yôšāh'*; *yôšēnāh'*; *yôšēnyāh*.

abound, there are no occurrences of the spelling Jehoseph<sup>(23)</sup>. Since the spelling Jehoseph probably had its genesis in the Hasmonean period, and since it appears predominantly (if not exclusively) in non-literary texts, we may conclude that the name Jehoseph was a popular, colloquial form of the name of Second Temple vintage. Therefore, the presence of the expanded form of the name Joseph in Ps 81,6 is a sign of lateness. While its presence may be one piece of evidence in favor of a late date for the composition of the psalm itself, we believe it is more likely that this form of the name attests to a late redaction of the psalm sometime during the Second Temple period. However that may be, special interpretive significance should not be attached to the expanded form of the name.

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<sup>(23)</sup> See the relevant entries in H. DUENSING, *Verzeichnis der Personen- und der Geographischen Namen in der Mischna* (Stuttgart 1960), and J. LEVY, *Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midraschim*, 4 vols. (Berlin - Wien 1924).

## Hosea's Gift to Gomer (Hos 3,2)

Hosea's marriage experience and its symbolism (Hos 1-3) continue to intrigue exegetes. This study will attempt to contribute to the solution of just one problem. In chapter 3,2 after being told by Yahweh to go and love a woman (v. 1), Hosea says: "So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley" RSV<sup>(1)</sup>. In the first part of this paper I will examine the different problems of this verse and the solutions proposed. In the second part I will present my own solution.

### I. The Problems of Hos 3,2

Nearly everything in this short verse is disputed: the verb, the price paid for the woman and the identification of the persons involved.

#### 1. *The verb*: וַיִּקְנֶה

Many scholars see the root קנה in this verb<sup>(2)</sup>. This rare verb is used in only three other texts. In two instances the verb is constructed with ל and is then translated: "to bargain over" (Job 6,27; 40,30). The verse in Hosea does not have ל, and it is closer to Deut 2,6: the verb has an object and the price is indicated. The translation becomes, therefore, "to buy", "to acquire for a price": "I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver...".

<sup>(1)</sup> To my knowledge no special study of this verse exists. One can find a good survey of the different positions, covering thirty years, in H. H. ROWLEY, "The Marriage of Hosea", *BJRL* 39 (1956-7) 200-233, reprinted in *Men of God: Studies in Old Testament History and Prophecy* (London 1963) 66-97. For later developments, some recent commentaries which discuss this verse at length may be consulted: W. RUDOLPH, *Hosea* (KAT XIII; Gütersloh 1966); H. W. WOLFF, *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea* (translated by G. Stansell; Hermeneia; Philadelphia 1974) (the original German <sup>1</sup>1965); C. VAN LEEUWEN, *Hosea* (De prediking van het Oude Testament; Nijkerk 1978); F. I. ANDERSEN-D. N. FREEDMAN, *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 24; Garden City, NY 1980).

<sup>(2)</sup> E.g.; E. JACOB, *Osée* (Commentaire de l'Ancien Testament XIa; Genève <sup>2</sup>1982) 36; C. VAN GELDEREN-W. H. GISPEN, *Het Boek Hosea* (Commentaar op het Oude Testament; Kampen 1953) 74; WOLFF, *Hosea*, 56, 61.



However, the unusual form of the verb in Hosea 3,2 raises a grammatical problem. The dagesh in the כ is difficult to explain. Some scholars, therefore, drop this dagesh<sup>(3)</sup>. This textual change is not based upon any textual evidence. The more common explanation is the one proposed by Gesenius-Kautzsch, which calls it a *dagesh forte dirimens*, which was inserted to make "the sewa more audible"<sup>(4)</sup>. But this solution is not convincing. If the verb is from the root כרה the shewa should be silent and secondly, this would be the only case of such a dagesh in the letter כ.

Some have suggested that the root כרה could mean "to hire", like the Arabic verb, *karā* used in reference to hiring beasts. The verse then would say that Hosea took over the management of a prostitute without putting her to work. Since the Septuagint has ἐμμενέμενος, the Greek translators may have taken כרה to mean "to hire".

Because of the grammatical difficulty other scholars consider נכר as the root of the verb. This would explain the presence of the dagesh. C. H. Gordon<sup>(5)</sup> believes that this root appears in the King Keret text of Ugarit as the technical term for the payment required for remarriage. R. Gordis<sup>(6)</sup>, who does not agree that there was a technical term for remarriage in Hebrew, thinks that the root נכר simply means "to purchase (for marriage)". This is based upon 1 Sam 23,7 where the Hebrew text has נכר which was understood in the LXX to mean "sold".

However, while accepting the root נכר, A. D. Tushingham and L. Waterman<sup>(7)</sup> propose that it means "to acknowledge" or "to recognize" in a legally binding fashion. "I recognized her" as mine would mean: "I acquired formal legal possession of her" by the financial transaction of which the text speaks.

The verb leaves us thus with a problem<sup>(8)</sup>. Nevertheless, the verb has something to do with "I acquired her", "I gained her".

<sup>(3)</sup> This is the reading suggested in R. KITTEL (ed.), *Biblia Hebraica* (Stuttgart 1951).

<sup>(4)</sup> Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar as edited and enlarged by the late E. KAUTZSCH*, Engl. transl. by A. E. COWLEY (Oxford 1933) § 20h.

<sup>(5)</sup> C. H. GORDON, "TRH, TN and NKR in the Ras Shamra Tablets", *JBL* 57 (1938) 407-410.

<sup>(6)</sup> R. GORDIS, "Hosea's Marriage and Message: A New Approach", *HUCA* 25 (1954) 9-35. On this question see p. 25 and note 37. Gordon's reading of the Keret text is disputed. H. L. GINSBERG, *Legend of King Keret* (New Haven 1946) 16 reads *nkr* as an adjective used as a noun, "stranger". Cf. also J. GRAY, *The Krt Text in the Literature of Ras Shamra: A Social Myth of Ancient Canaan* (Leiden 1964) 44; VAN LEEUWEN, *Hosea*, 87.

<sup>(7)</sup> A. D. TUSHINGHAM, "A Reconsideration of Hosea, Chapters 1-3", *JNES* 12 (1953) 150-159; based upon D. DAUBE, *Studies in Biblical Law* (Cambridge 1947) 5ff.; L. WATERMAN, "Hosea, Chapters 1-3, in Retrospect and Prospect", *JNES* 14 (1955) 100-109; M. DAHOOD, "Causal Beth and the Root NKR in Nahum 3,4", *Bib* 52 (1971) 395-396, *nkr* in *hiphil* = know, to recognize.

<sup>(8)</sup> In the past scholars were inclined to emend the biblical text. Some did so in this case: A. B. EHRLICH, emended to שכר: "I hired her", *Randglossen zur*

2. *The price*: "fifteen silver (shekels) and a homer of barley and a lethech of barley"<sup>(9)</sup>.

The price Hosea pays is partly in money and partly in kind, i.e., in food. The Hebrew text has simply "silver", but the shekel may be implied (Gen 23,15). The "homer" (חֹמֶר), which according to the etymology means: "a mule load", was a unit of dry measurement. The "lethech" (לֶתֶחַ) is used only in this verse. Most scholars, basing themselves upon the old versions, suggest that it would be half a homer<sup>(10)</sup>. Hosea, therefore, would have given one and a half homer of barley.

Scholars have tried to calculate the value of this in money to form a better idea of how much Hosea paid. Two "seahs" (סָאָה) of barley were evaluated at one shekel during the famine at the time of the siege of Samaria (2 Kgs 7,1.16.18). It is suggested that in normal times the price would be lower, perhaps three seahs for one shekel. Since there are 30 seahs in one homer, the one and a half homer of barley given by Hosea would amount to 15 shekels. What Hosea paid would have the value of 30 shekels: 15 in money and 15 in food. This amount would correspond to the price of a slave (Exod 21,32). The conjectural nature of this whole calculation is obvious and it is evident that the price of slaves varied (Lev 27,2-7)<sup>(11)</sup>. It does not seem proven, therefore, that Hosea paid the price of a slave.

Barley is said to be the cheapest of cereals and this is taken as proof that Hosea was not very wealthy<sup>(12)</sup>, or that the woman was very low in the social scale<sup>(13)</sup>. These interpretations may go beyond what the text says.

*hebräischen Bibel textkritisches, sprachliches und sachliches*, V (Hildesheim 1968 [first published 1912] 171; L. WATERMAN to כָּרַר: "I caused her to turn back to me", "The Marriage of Hosea", *JBL* 37 (1918) 193-208, but he changed his mind later; J. M. WARD, to פָּדָה: "I ransomed her", *Hosea: A Theological Commentary* (New York 1966) 48-49.

<sup>(9)</sup> On weights and measures: R. DE VAUX, *Les Institutions de l'Ancien Testament*, vol. I (Paris 1958) 297-317; O. R. SELLERS, art. "Weights and Measures", *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. IV (Nashville 1962) 828-839; R. B. Y. SCOTT, "Weights and Measures of the Bible", *BA* 22 (1959) 22-40; D. H. WHEATON, art. "Weights and Measures", *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, vol. III (Leicester 1980) 1634-1640; Y. YADIN, "Ancient Judaean Weights and the Date of the Samaria Ostraca", *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 8 (1961) 9-25.

<sup>(10)</sup> "The *lethech*, mentioned only in Hos. 3,2, possibly a Phoenician measure, is interpreted by Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion and the Vulgate as 1/2 cor". The cor was equal to the homer: "The standard unit of dry measurement in the Old Testament was the *homer* also called the *cor* through the assimilation of two systems", SCOTT, "Weights and Measures", 31.

<sup>(11)</sup> For an excellent critique of this conjectural calculation, cf. A. VAN HOONACKER, *Les douze petits prophètes, traduits et commentés* (EBib; Paris 1908) 34-35.

<sup>(12)</sup> "... barley was worth only half the value of wheat, and was used more for fodder than for bread in times of plenty", WOLFF, *Hosea*, 61 and note 48: 1 Kgs 5,8; 2 Sam 17,28; Ezek 4,9 (used for bread during time of war).

<sup>(13)</sup> "... that this amount was not even paid in money, but half of it in barley — a kind of food so generally despised throughout antiquity (vile hordeum):

Perhaps barley was simply the only cereal available to Hosea for some reason. Or it may be a symbol of hard times to come since the text does speak of the future exile (3,3-4) which is to be a time of deprivation, similar to the time of the siege of Samaria (2 Kgs 7,1).

The LXX has a partly different reading. Where MT has "a lethech of barley" (לֶחֶם בָּרֶקֶת), the LXX reads  $\nu\epsilon\beta\epsilon\lambda$  οἴνου "a skin or a jar of wine"<sup>(14)</sup>, which in Hebrew would be גַּבְלֵיין.  $\nu\epsilon\beta\epsilon\lambda$  is not Greek but Hebrew. Since the translator has simply taken the Hebrew word into his Greek text, he must have considered  $\nu\epsilon\beta\epsilon\lambda$  as a measurement for liquids. It may be an instance of two different readings<sup>(15)</sup>. The reading of the LXX adds something interesting to the price mentioned in Hosea: it would be made up of money, food and drink.

The price of the transaction in Hosea's case is in money and food (and drink?). This is rather unusual. There are a few other texts where an amount of money, and only money, is quoted in relation to humans. Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels (Gen 37,28) while the penalty to compensate for a male or female slave killed by one's ox was thirty shekels (Exod 21,32). There is also the text related to vows: "If anyone vows the value of a person to Yahweh and wishes to discharge the vow..." (Lev 27,2-7; cf. Zech 11,13), in which the amount varies according to sex and age from as high as fifty to as low as three shekels. In the case of a compulsory marriage after raping a virgin, a man will pay the father of the girl fifty shekels (Deut 22,28-29).

Since it is difficult to calculate the precise value of the food Hosea offers, the total value of his transaction remains unknown. It is, therefore, very difficult to compare it with any of the preceding cases especially when the variation from one century to another and the pressures of inflation have to be considered.

Basically two major interpretations have been given of the price. Some consider it the price of a slave because their calculations add up to 30 shekels which is the so-called price of a slave in Exod 21,32. Others consider this the bride-price מָהָר, i.e., the sum paid by the bridegroom to the father of his future bride.

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see at Num. 5,15) — was intended to depict still more strikingly the deeply depressed condition of the woman", C. F. KEIL, *The Twelve Minor Prophets*, I (Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament 24; Grand Rapids 1961 [original German 1866]) 69.

<sup>(14)</sup> This text-critical problem has been studied in many commentaries. H. NYBERG, "Das textkritische Problem des Alten Testaments am Hoseabuche demonstriert", *ZAW* 52 (1934) 241-254.

<sup>(15)</sup> RUDOLPH, *Hosea*, 85, suggests a different solution for this occurrence of  $\nu\epsilon\beta\epsilon\lambda$  οἴνου in the LXX. It may have been a marginal note (*Randbemerkung*) which originally was related to the last words of v. 1.

### 3. Identification of the actors

There may be three actors involved in the transaction: "I acquired her". The only actor whose identity is clear is the "I", i.e. Hosea. But who is this woman ("her"), and who received the price? All this is closely related to the interpretation of the entire story of Hosea 1-3.

Some scholars suggest that the biographical narrative (Hos 1) and the autobiographical story (Hos 3) tell the same story: the marriage of Hosea with Gomer. In this hypothesis "her" would be Gomer and the father of Gomer would have received the bride-price. For others, Hos 1 and Hos 3 speak of two different marriages of Hosea. After his first marriage with Gomer (Hos 1) broke up, Hosea married another woman (Hos 3). This unnamed woman would then be "her" and, again, it could be that her father received the bride-price.

But the majority of authors see a follow-up between Hos 1 and Hos 3. After Hosea married Gomer, the marriage broke up. It may be that Hosea sent her away or that Gomer left but, whatever happened, Hosea is taking her back. The "her", therefore, would be Gomer. But who received the price? This is determined by where Gomer may have been after the separation and before the reunion. She may have returned to her father (Lev 22,13; Judg 19,2). He then may have received the price, not of course as a real bride-price, since a person would not have to pay for his wife twice. Gomer may also have become very poor and been forced to sell herself as a slave and thus Hosea would have paid "the price of a slave" to free Gomer from her owner<sup>(16)</sup>. Gomer may have become a prostitute, a common street walker, and the fee was then paid to her pimp<sup>(17)</sup>. She may have become a sacred prostitute in a sanctuary and it would then be the priest(s) of that sanctuary who received the price Hosea paid<sup>(18)</sup>. Or, finally, the price may have been a bribe to the lover with whom Gomer now lived.

A very limited number of scholars have proposed that Gomer herself received the price. C. F. Keil assumes that in Israel the bride-price was not given to the father but to the girl herself as a marriage present<sup>(19)</sup>. It has also been suggested that Hosea used this price to attract Gomer back to him<sup>(20)</sup>. Or, if Gomer was an independent prostitute, Hosea may have paid

<sup>(16)</sup> WOLFF, *Hosea*, 61, prefers this interpretation based upon his understanding of "who loves a friend" (v. 1a); VAN GELDEREN-GISPEN, *Het boek Hosea*, 75; VAN LEEUWEN, *Hosea*, 87-88.

<sup>(17)</sup> J. L. MAYS, *Hosea: A Commentary* (Old Testament Library; London 1969) 57.

<sup>(18)</sup> C. HAURET, *Amos et Osée* (Verbum Salutis AT 5; Paris 1970) 167; JACOB, *Osée*, 36.

<sup>(19)</sup> KEIL, *The Twelve Minor Prophets I*, 69. He is the only one to suggest this. The biblical texts suggest that the father received the bride-price, as we will see later in this study.

<sup>(20)</sup> VAN HOONACKER, *Les douze petits prophètes*, 35-36.

her to have her for himself alone<sup>(21)</sup>. The translation based upon the LXX ("I hired her") would then fit well.

## II. A New Proposal

The research done on the marriage of Hosea has been mostly diachronic. Scholars have tried to discover "what really happened". The variety of the proposed solutions indicates that we will never be able to answer this question. Lately several scholars have opted for a synchronic approach to these texts<sup>(22)</sup>. The question is basically "What does the text say?".

I argue that the life experience of Hosea helps us to understand the oracular material and that the oracles in return help us to understand his life experience. Two passages in the oracles shed some light on the understanding of the verse under discussion (3,2). They suggest that Hosea offers the gift to Gomer herself.

### 1. *Parallel between Hos 2,21-22 and Hos 3,2*

In one of the oracles of restoration Yahweh says: "I will betroth you to myself with righteousness and with..." (2,21-22) (וְאַרְשִׁיתִי לִי בְצֶדֶק). This verse is clearly parallel to 3,2: "I acquired her to myself with fifteen shekels of silver..." (וְאִקְרָהָ לִי בְחַמֶּשֶׁה).

In both cases the verb is in the first person and is spoken by the male partner. The verb has the suffix "you" or "her" referring to the female partner. The verb is followed by לִי ("to myself") and by a description of how the action is carried out introduced by בְּ.

The verb "betroth" אָרַשׁ in the biblical world does not mean what we call engagement. It is a legally binding relationship which comes into existence when the bride-price is given to the father of the betrothed bride<sup>(23)</sup>. However, the marriage relationship is not yet complete. The next step is "to take her" or "to lead her home" לָקַח (Hos 1,2; cf. Deut 20,7) and then "to lie with her" שָׁנַג (Deut 28,30) or "to know her" יָדַע (Gen 4,1). The man has thus acquired a legal right to his wife which is explicitly stressed by the לִי "to myself". The father of the bride can have no further objections to the

<sup>(21)</sup> RUDOLPH, *Hosea*, 92. He also quotes the opinion of Ginsberg, which he accepts: "that what he acquired was the privileges of a *souteneur*" (note 19).

<sup>(22)</sup> See my "'Osée - Gomer' *car et comme* 'Yahweh - Israel' Os. 1-3", *NRT* 103 (1981) 711-727. In this study I suggest the following structure: experience of Hosea (1,2-9; 2,1-3), 3 oracles of doom (vv. 4-6; vv. 7-9; vv. 10-15), oracle of transition (vv. 16-17), 3 oracles of salvation (vv. 18-19; vv. 20-22; vv. 23-25), experience of Hosea (3,1-5). For my reply to some criticism: W. VOGELS, "Diachronic and Synchronic Studies of Hosea 1-3", *BZ* 28 (1984) 94-98.

<sup>(23)</sup> DE VAUX, *Les Institutions*, vol. I, *Le mariage*, 45-65; W. PLAUTZ, "Die Form der Eheschliessung im Alten Testament", *ZAW* 76 (1964) 298-318.

marriage. It was indeed with the father of the girl that the transactions were conducted. Hamor, the father of Shechem, wants the daughter of Jacob as wife for his son and therefore discusses the bride-price with Jacob (Gen 34,6-12; cf. also Deut 22,28-29). Saul asks David for "a hundred foreskins of the Philistines" (1 Sam 18,25) as payment for his daughter Michal whom David wants to marry. Later we read: "David then sent messengers to Ishbaal son of Saul, 'Give me back my wife Michal', he said 'whom I betrothed at the price of a hundred foreskins of the Philistines' אֶרְשָׁתִּי לִי בָּ" (2 Sam 3,14). This verse has a structure like the verse in question: the verb "betroth", "to myself" בָּ and the ב (it has been called the "ב-pretii") which introduces the price.

The ב in Hos 2,21-22 has exactly the same function. The bride-price that Yahweh will pay is "righteousness — justice — tenderness — love". Even after Israel has been unfaithful, Yahweh is still ready to start all over again with a new betrothal as if a totally new marriage is to follow. In this relationship the bride-price is not given to the father of the bride, but to the bride herself. Israel receives Yahweh's gifts.

The narrative then takes us back to the experience of Hosea. The prophet realizes that in his relationship with Gomer he had better follow what he is preaching about the relationship between Yahweh and Israel: "just as Yahweh gives his love" (3,1). Gomer may have been unfaithful, a separation may have occurred, but a new start is possible. This is what Hosea does: "I acquired her to myself with. . ." (3,2). The translation proposed by A. D. Tushingham based upon the root נָכַר, "I acquired formal legal possession of her", would fit well here. What Hosea decides to do is an exact parallel with the betrothal. This is confirmed by what follows: "For many days you must keep yourself quietly for me, not playing the whore or offering yourself to others; and I will do the same for you" (3,3). This perhaps indicates that Hosea had not yet led Gomer back home and that he did not lie with her. There is, however, a firm commitment to a new total relationship. And, therefore, based again upon the textual parallel, the text indicates that Hosea pays the price to Gomer herself, not to her father or any other male. What Yahweh does for Israel, Hosea can do for Gomer: "fifteen silver shekels and a homer of barley and a lethech of barley". The barley may not be the best of cereals because, indeed, this period between the acquisition (new betrothal) and the consummation of the (re)marriage is now a period of purification, which is very different from what that same period was in their first encounter. For Israel it will be the time of the exile.

## 2. Confirmation from Hos 2,5

The textual parallel between Hos 2,21-22 and Hos 3,2 suggests that Hosea gives the "bride-price" to Gomer herself. This is confirmed by other verses that precede it.

After describing the personal experience of Hosea's marriage (1,2-9) the text moves on: "Denounce your mother, denounce her, for she is not my wife nor am I her husband" (2,4). Many scholars have understood this

statement as a declaration of divorce, based upon extra-biblical parallels<sup>(24)</sup>. And the text continues: "... or else I will strip her naked" (2,5). To be stripped naked is often a punishment for breaking a marriage relationship by adultery or by divorce. This custom was well known in Mesopotamia from the middle of the second millennium on<sup>(25)</sup>. To be stripped like a prostitute is also a frequent feature in treaty curses in the Ancient Near East<sup>(26)</sup>. A treaty can indeed be compared to a marriage bond, as the marriage of Hosea which becomes the symbol of the covenant of Yahweh with his people clearly illustrates. Several biblical texts speak of Israel being stripped because of her adultery, i.e. her unfaithfulness (Ezek 16,37-39; cf. Isa 47,2-3; Jer 13,22; Nah 3,5).

After the divorce between Hosea and Gomer (2,4), the prophet himself will strip his wife<sup>(27)</sup>. In a marriage the husband was responsible for the clothing and the food of his wife (Exod 21,10). By marrying Gomer Hosea had taken this responsibility upon himself. When they separate Hosea takes all this back from her. Gomer is sent from the house naked.

The giving of clothing and food by the husband to his wife and taking them back is one of the major concerns in the following oracles of doom which speak about the relationship between Yahweh and Israel. In the second oracle of doom (vv. 7-9), the unfaithful wife believes that her lovers provide her with all that. Israel believes that the Baals provide everything. "I am going to court my lovers", she said, 'who give me my bread and water, my wool, my flax, my oil and my drink'" (v. 7). For clothing there is wool and flax; for food bread; for drink water. That same theme is repeated in the third oracle (vv. 10-15). In the accusation it is said: "She would not acknowledge, not she, that I was the one who was giving her the grain, the wine, the oil, and who freely gave her that silver and gold. . ." (v. 10) and in the announcement of the punishment: "That is why, when the time comes, I mean to withdraw my grain, and my wine, when the season for it comes. I will retrieve my wool, my flax, that were intended to cover her nakedness. . ." (v. 11). In both verses the food is grain and the drink wine. This wine is in contrast with the water offered her by her lovers. For clothing there is wool and flax in one verse (v. 11), while in the other verse the silver

<sup>(24)</sup> M. A. FRIEDMAN, "Israel's Response in Hosea 2:17b; 'You are my Husband'", *JBL* 99 (1980) 199-204; A. PHILLIPS, "Some Aspects of Family Law in Pre-Exilic Israel", *VT* 23 (1973) 349-361; Id., "Another Example of Family Law", *VT* 30 (1980) 240-245.

<sup>(25)</sup> C. KUHL, "Neue Dokumente zum Verständnis von Hosea 2,4-15", *ZAW* 52 (1934) 102-109; C. H. GORDON, "Hos 2:4-5 in the Light of New Semitic Inscriptions", *ZAW* 54 (1936) 277-280; HAURET, *Amos et Osée*, 153; VAN LEEUWEN, *Hosea*, 54.

<sup>(26)</sup> D. R. HILLERS, *Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets* (BibOr 16; Rome 1964) 58-60.

<sup>(27)</sup> D. H. SMALL, "The Prophet Hosea: God's Alternative to Divorce for the Reason of Infidelity", *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 7 (1979) 133-140. "This stripping of a divorced woman was the converse of the widespread custom whereby the husband cast his mantle over his bride during the marriage ceremony, a gesture of protection and of covenant faithfulness" (138).

and the gold may have the same role to play (v. 10) because the wife can buy herself the clothes she wants with them.

	<i>lovers</i>	<i>Yahweh</i>	
	v. 7	v. 10	v. 11
<i>clothing:</i>	wool - flax	silver - gold	wool - flax
<i>food:</i>	bread	grain	grain
<i>drink:</i>	water	wine	wine

This now sheds some new light on the verse under discussion (3,2). When Hosea married Gomer he was responsible for her clothing and food. When they separate he sends her away naked; Gomer has nothing anymore. When Hosea decides to take her back, he returns to Gomer what he has taken away from her. "I acquired her for fifteen silver (shekels) and a homer of barley and a lethech of barley" (3,2).

This price is given to Gomer and to nobody else. With the money that Hosea gives her, she can buy her clothing and she can use the barley as food. This explains why, contrary to the other cases of transactions for humans, Hosea's gift is partly in money and partly in kind. It is here that the LXX reading becomes interesting: "for fifteen silver (shekels) and a homer of barley and a jar of wine". Besides the money for the clothing and besides the food, there is also a reference to drink. This provides another parallel with the gifts Yahweh gave to Israel.

	<i>Yahweh to Israel (2,10)</i>	<i>Hosea to Gomer (3,2)</i>
<i>clothing:</i>	silver - gold	silver
<i>food:</i>	grain	barley
<i>drink:</i>	wine	wine

It is also interesting to note that in the oracle of transition (2,16-17) it is said that Yahweh will make sure that Israel will have wine to drink: "I am going to give her back her vineyards" (v. 17). And in the third oracle of salvation (2,23-25) Yahweh promises to give food and drink to Israel: "the grain, the wine..." (v. 24)<sup>(28)</sup>.

The interpretation of Hos 3,2, which we have proposed reinforces the general interpretation of Hos 1-3 as containing parallel accounts, on the one hand, of the way Yahweh acts towards Israel, and on the other, the way Hosea acts towards Gomer.

Since Yahweh is ready to take Israel back and offer her gifts, so Hosea takes Gomer back and offers her gifts that constitute a new bride-price which is now given directly to the woman. There is once again a legally firm link between Hosea and Gomer. By doing this he returns to her what he used to

<sup>(28)</sup> The Masoretic text speaks of "new wine", "must" תִּירוֹשׁ in the three verses (2,10,11,24), but in all these verses the LXX has "wine" οἶνος, the same term as in 3,2.



give her in their former married life, but withdrew from her at the time of their separation.

This is also how Yahweh acted towards Israel. He, too, gave her whatever she needed, but withdrew it from her because of Israel's unfaithfulness. In the new relationship Yahweh's gift to Israel will be his faithfulness and love (2,21-22) but he will also return his material gifts to her (2,17.24).

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## RES BIBLIOGRAPHICAE

Un tentativo di «critica della critica» testuale  
dell'Antico Testamento

Nel 1982 fu pubblicato il primo volume del rapporto conclusivo dei lavori del Comitato per l'analisi testuale dell'Antico Testamento ebraico istituito dall'Alleanza Biblica Universale. Esso era dedicato ai libri storici e ad Ester.

A quattro anni di distanza dal primo, è uscito questo secondo volume, curato sempre da D. Barthélemy, e dedicato a Isaia, Geremia e Lamentazioni<sup>(1)</sup>. Il secondo volume si presenta ancor più ampio del primo, e con una struttura parimenti articolata: prefazione (p. IX), *avant-propos* (pp. XI-XVIII), introduzione (pp. \*1-\*71), commento testuale (Isaia: pp. 1-465; Geremia: pp. 466-862; Lamentazioni: pp. 863-917). Concludono il volume gli indici, senza i quali l'uso di un'opera di tale mole e contenuto sarebbe assai arduo (passi biblici, pp. 913-939; autori citati, pp. 941-967; fattori degli apparati, pp. 969-974). Troviamo infine la bibliografia (pp. 975-1013).

È noto che la ragione che condusse alla formazione del Comitato di sei studiosi — oltre a Barthélemy, A. R. Hulst (†), N. Lohfink, W. D. McHardy, H. P. Rüger, J. A. Sanders — fu la richiesta di aiuto da parte dei gruppi di traduttori in lingue moderne della Scrittura coordinati dall'ABU: essi non sapevano come comportarsi di fronte a numerosi casi in cui la resa del Testo Masoretico poneva loro problemi.

Da questa necessità è partito il Comitato, intraprendendo il più vasto esame di difficoltà testuali della Bibbia ebraica finora condotto. Il lavoro è durato dieci anni, dal 1969 al 1979<sup>(2)</sup>.

Abbiamo già dedicato un'ampia recensione al primo volume<sup>(3)</sup>; può es-

(1) Dominique BARTHÉLEMY (ed.), *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*. 2. Isaïe, Jérémie, Lamentations (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 50/2). Fribourg Suisse-Göttingen, Editions Universitaires-Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986. xviii-\*71-1013 p. 23,3 × 15,8. Fr. S. 300. Questi i dati del primo volume: Dominique BARTHÉLEMY (ed.), *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*. 1. Josué, Juges, Ruth, Samuel, Rois, Chroniques, Esdras, Néhémie, Esther (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 50/1). Fribourg Suisse-Göttingen, Editions Universitaires-Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982. xxviii-\*114-666 p. 23,3 × 15,8.

(2) Per notizie sul costituirsi del Comitato e sulle modalità del lavoro, si veda il primo volume, pp. \*66ss.

(3) P. G. BORBONE, «La critica del testo e l'Antico Testamento ebraico. A proposito di un libro recente», *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 20 (1984), 251-274. Altre recensioni al primo volume si trovano in *Henoch* 6 (1984) 315-321

sere utile riprendere qui le osservazioni a suo tempo formulate rispetto al metodo seguito dal Comitato ed ai risultati cui esso ha inevitabilmente condotto, pur non potendo per ovvie ragioni di spazio riportare tutte le nostre argomentazioni a sostegno di esse.

a) Le finalità del Comitato hanno portato a confondere il livello dell'indagine filologica scientifica e quello teologico, finendo per far prevalere questo secondo. Ciò risalta con particolare evidenza da alcune considerazioni che sono fondamentali per il Comitato, relative a quale tipo di testo si voglia raggiungere. Si veda il primo volume, p. \*77: si vuole ricostruire

le texte de l'Écriture Sainte, c'est-à-dire accéder à la forme la plus ancienne en laquelle on puisse prouver que tel écrit a fonctionné comme livre sacré pour une communauté qui y cherchait les références de son identité, références que nous y cherchons encore aujourd'hui. C'est à un texte reçu comme 'canonique' que nous nous intéressons [...] la visée du Comité l'amènera à préférer parfois un texte qui est 'wrong' (= de mauvaise qualité) au point de vue littéraire mais authentique au sens canonique du mot à un texte conjectural qui a des chances d'être littérairement exact, mais dont nous ne possédons aucun indice qu'il ait fonctionné comme Écriture Sainte pour une communauté.

b) Poiché, come già si è detto, l'impulso originario del lavoro è pratico e contingente, cioè consiste nell'aiutare gruppi di traduttori in lingue moderne ad affrontare e risolvere un numero *limitato* per quanto ampio di difficoltà testuali — per di più individuate a partire dalle traduzioni *moderne* della Bibbia —, il Comitato si è indirizzato nel proprio studio su casi particolarmente controversi, e non ha condotto una *recensio* completa della tradizione testuale biblica.

Questi presupposti sono tali da qualificare il lavoro diversamente da un'indagine propriamente filologica: in primo luogo perché le premesse confessionali (o interconfessionali) — beninteso legittime, nel loro ambito — mal si conciliano con le caratteristiche del lavoro critico-testuale («un'edizione è critica nella misura in cui esclude in partenza ogni concetto di imposizione»<sup>(4)</sup>). Inoltre, su un piano strettamente tecnico, la mancanza di una *recensio* globale è incompatibile con la critica del testo.

Perciò è chiaro che, a dispetto del titolo, il lavoro condotto dal Comitato non consiste nella 'critica testuale' del testo biblico in senso proprio, ma piuttosto nell'esame della storia di certe difficoltà, senza lo scopo di ricostruire l'originale — che è l'ineludibile meta della critica del testo — con la prospettiva di ottenere un testo il più vicino possibile al Testo Masoretico, comprensibile e quindi traducibile, per un uso confessionale/interconfessionale<sup>(5)</sup>.

[B. Chiesa], *BO* 41 (1984) 694-697 [P. B. Dirksen], *CBQ* 46 (1984) 735-737 [L. La-berge], *JSS* 30 (1985) 285-289 [A. Tal], *JTS* 37 (1986) 445-450 [J. Barr].

<sup>(4)</sup> D'A. S. AVALLE, *Principi di critica testuale* (Padova 1978) 30.

<sup>(5)</sup> Si veda il primo volume, p. \*111: «Nous pouvons donc considérer le Texte Massorétique tибérien — quant aux livres qu'il contient — comme un témoin essentiellement fidèle de la Bible que Paul lisait aux pieds de Gamaliel».

Quanto detto finora vale anche per il secondo volume, che non presenta, come d'altronde era ovvio aspettarsi, modifiche né per quanto riguarda l'atteggiamento del Comitato verso il testo biblico, né per quanto riguarda il metodo seguito. In esso, tuttavia, si nota una consapevolezza più marcata, ed una sostanziale ammissione, delle caratteristiche non filologiche del lavoro. Infatti, mentre l'introduzione al primo volume proponeva una teoria generale della storia del testo biblico, e tentava di fondare storicamente il modo in cui il Comitato lo tratta, l'introduzione al secondo volume implicitamente ed esplicitamente riduce il lavoro nei propri limiti.

Implicitamente, per l'argomento che essa tratta — la storia di cinque versioni moderne —, lasciando da parte più fondamentali problemi filologici, sui quali peraltro era stata promessa una trattazione<sup>(6)</sup>.

Esplicitamente, il venir meno delle ambizioni filologiche risalta quando il Comitato dichiara di rendersi conto che il suo lavoro è nato da «une problématique très contingente, puisqu'il a été chargé par l'Alliance Biblique universelle de prendre position sur les options textuelles de cinq traductions récentes de la Bible en anglais, français et allemand» (p. \*1), e si domanda se «les buts d'un organisme mondial visant principalement une très large diffusion de la Bible sont-ils aisément compatibles avec ceux de la recherche scientifique de tradition universitaire» (p. \*3). La risposta a questo quesito è positiva, e consiste nell'affermare tale compatibilità fondandola sull'esigenza di sottoporre a critica «oggettiva e rigorosa» la critica testuale come la si pratica oggi — a partire dal XVIII secolo ad oggi, per l'esattezza. Perciò, il Comitato ha considerato che l'esame dei casi selezionati dall'ABU, in cui esistevano discrepanze ed incertezze di traduzione tra le più diffuse versioni moderne, fosse una buona occasione per intraprendere tale necessaria «critica della critica» (ibid.).

Questa affermazione rappresenta un significativo chiarimento, rispetto a quelle più sfumate del primo volume. Se abbiamo ben compreso, essa significa che il Comitato ha ritenuto che fosse possibile realizzare uno scopo scientifico limitato — l'analisi dei metodi e delle soluzioni applicate a casi «difficili» del Testo Masoretico — nell'ambito di un progetto avente finalità di per sé non scientifiche.

In sé è del tutto legittimo sottoporre a critica le fasi precedenti della ricerca, individuandone i limiti dovuti alle opzioni filosofiche, al clima culturale, in cui si trovarono ad operare i nostri predecessori — il che ci dovrebbe avvertire anche rispetto ai nostri limiti; ma ci pare che il Comitato non sia riuscito nel proprio scopo, cioè non sia riuscito a dare sostanza alle caratteristiche di «oggettività e rigore» che pure invoca come ispiratrici della propria «critica della critica».

<sup>(6)</sup> Si tratta della ricostruzione della «forma più autentica del testo tiberiense classico»; cfr. I vol. p. \*112: «Nous réservons aux introductions des volumes suivants de ce rapport final de montrer comment, après ces dix ans de travail du Comité, nous nous représentons cette tâche de critique interne des témoins du Texte Massorétique. Nous essaierons aussi d'y analyser certains des problèmes que pose l'établissement de cette forme la plus authentique du texte tiberien classique».

Tale sostanza si sarebbe potuta conseguire, in effetti, solo con un atteggiamento meno ipotecato dagli apriorismi confessionali (o contingenti) di cui già si è detto, e di conseguenza con l'uso coerente dei metodi filologici e dei criteri della critica testuale moderna. Invece risultano evidenti anche su questo secondo livello alcuni caratteri negativi: un preconcetto a favore del Testo Masoretico, un uso talvolta fuorviante dei classici criteri filologici (*lectio difficilior*, ad esempio), la disattenzione per il contesto dei casi presi in esame, e la non presa in considerazione dei fatti ideologici che agiscono sulla trasmissione del testo.

Valga a dimostrare ciò qualche esempio:

1. *Isaia* 3,24: si tratta di un testo che vale la pena di riportare per intero:

וְהָיָה  
תַּחַת בִּשְׁם מֶלֶךְ יְהוָה  
וְתַחַת חֲגֹרֶת נֶקֶפֶה  
וְתַחַת מַעֲשֵׂה מִקְשָׁה קִרְחָה  
וְתַחַת פְּתִיגִיל מִחֲגֶרֶת שֶׁקֶל  
כִּי תַחַת יָפִי

La variante presa in considerazione è di 1Q Is<sup>a</sup>, e riguarda l'ultimo stico:  
כִּי תַחַת יָפִי בֶשֶׁת.

La situazione del resto della tradizione, che è sostanzialmente irrilevante approfondire qui, non si differenzia dal TM e rivela naturalmente la difficoltà di tradurre un testo che si presenta tronco. Il Comitato, dopo una dotta ed ampia discussione (cfr. pp. 26-29), decide per il TM, rifiutando il testo di Qumran, perché si tratta della *lectio difficilior*. Nel commento, viene sottolineato che esiste un'interpretazione che vuole leggere il כִּי come un sostantivo («bruciatura», derivato dalla radice כָּה), e che la prima attestazione di questa interpretazione — in seguito manifestatasi a varie riprese — si ritrova nel *Talmud* babilonese, dove è attribuita all'amoreo Raba (Shabbat 62b). La lezione di Qumran, senza essere discussa a fondo, viene classificata come una «parafrasi», cioè uno «sviluppo letterario» (cf. p. XIV).

Se il Comitato avesse fatto uso di un concetto più preciso di *lectio difficilior*, e se avesse tenuto conto del contesto, il giudizio non avrebbe potuto che essere a favore del testo di Qumran come originale. Esso, infatti, è «assolutamente insospettabile. Anche il *ky* che introduce solo l'ultimo membro, non interrompe affatto il parallelismo. I *kola* sono 5: vanno due per due e l'ultimo li riassume tutti e ad essi si sovrappone. *ky* non ha in questo passo il valore di 'perché', ma il valore asseverativo caratteristico degli oracoli»<sup>(7)</sup>. La funzione riassuntiva dell'ultimo stico è evidente dal contenuto: la mancanza di profumi, di cintura, di riccioli, di veste ampia, equivale alla perdita della bellezza; esattamente come il sopravvenire di fetore, corda, testa calva, abito da lutto, si compendia nella «vergogna». Non ha senso ipotizzare un

<sup>(7)</sup> Cfr. P. SACCHI, *Il rotolo A di Isaia*. Problemi di storia del testo (Accademia toscana di Scienze e Lettere «La Colombaria»; Firenze 1965) 85-86.

termine specifico come «bruciatura» in parallelo con un termine che ha qui funzione generica e riassuntiva dei precedenti, quale è «bellezza». Che poi esegeti medievali giudaici abbiano cercato di interpretare un testo corrotto con acrobazie lessicografiche, è normale; meno ovvio è che il Comitato, così attento a 'demitizzare' i presupposti culturali degli studiosi moderni, non sia altrettanto sensibile alla necessità di inquadrare in un contesto ideologico anche le fasi precedenti della ricerca sul testo biblico.

2. *Geremia* 2,30-31: in effetti, il Comitato prende in esame solo l'inizio del v. 31 (pp. 473-474). Tuttavia è necessario tenere presente anche il v. 30, per impostare il discorso con obiettività.

30 לשוא הכיתי את בניכם מוסר לא לקחו אכלה חרבתכם נביאיכם כאריה משחית  
31 הדור אתם ראו דבר יהוה...

Il problema sta nell'inizio del v. 31, che la *BHK* e la *BHS* considerano una glossa da espungere. Il Comitato sembra concordare sul carattere di glossa della frase (che propone di tradurre: «Vous, contemporains, voyez la parole du Seigneur!»), ma ritiene che essa faccia parte a pieno diritto del testo, in quanto costituisce un «*développement rédactionnel antérieur à la clôture de la rédaction I* (représentée par le \*G)» (p. 473, corsivi dell'originale). In effetti, ci dice il Comitato, i LXX hanno anch'essi questa parte di testo, che interpretano comunque diversamente dal TM: καὶ οὐκ ἐφοβήθητε. Gli stessi LXX, sempre secondo il Comitato, glossano questa frase, aggiungendo in seguito τάδε λέγει κύριος, che non ha riscontro nel TM.

Se si espone in questi termini il problema, non c'è possibilità alcuna di vederne la portata. Occorre invece segnalare che ci sono altre differenze tra i LXX ed il TM, che non vanno trascurate.

Il testo dei LXX legge infatti:

Invano ho colpito i vostri figli, non avete accettato la lezione; *una spada* ha mangiato i vostri profeti come un leone distruttore, *ma non vi siete spaventati*; ascoltate la parola del Signore: così dice il Signore: sono forse stato un deserto per Israele...

Le parti corsive segnalano varianti. La prima, è la mancanza del suffisso pronominale per *spada*. Non è cosa da poco, perché qualifica diversamente l'uccisione dei profeti: qui, la spada sembra essere quella di Dio. Tale interpretazione è confermata dal seguito, quando esso indica il mancato pentimento degli Israeliti ed esorta all'ascolto delle parole di Dio: sia il colpire i figli, sia l'uccidere i profeti costituiscono la punizione di Dio. Quindi, il v. 30 descrive due momenti o aspetti del castigo di Dio per gli Israeliti, l'inizio del v. 31 ne evidenzia l'inefficacia ed il seguito presenta le conseguenze che Dio trae dall'insuccesso, decidendo di rivolgersi in termini chiari agli Ebrei.

Ben diverso è il senso del TM:

Invano ho colpito i vostri figli, *essi* non hanno accettato la lezione; la *vostra* spada ha mangiato i vostri profeti come un leone distruttore; voi, contemporanei, vedete la parola del Signore! Sono forse stato un deserto per Israele...

Il tenore di tutto il versetto è differente, non solo l'inizio del v. 31: chi agisce nell'uccidere i profeti sono gli Ebrei. È evidente che in questo passo non è entrata nessuna glossa, ma piuttosto è avvenuto un deliberato cambiamento testuale in funzione di una precisa ideologia, quella che vedeva i profeti come martiri, resi tali dal popolo<sup>(8)</sup>. Dato il carattere tardivo di questa ideologia, non è difficile ammettere che il testo originale è quello dei LXX, il quale per parte sua presenta un atteggiamento per così dire antiprofetico che ha molti paralleli nei testi profetici antichi<sup>(9)</sup>. Inoltre, anche sul piano letterario questo testo è più scorrevole e conseguente.

Riducendo l'attenzione ai soli termini iniziali del v. 31, senza attenzione al contesto, presentando in modo impreciso la testimonianza dei LXX e trascurando il peso di elementi ideologici nel corso della trasmissione del testo biblico, il Comitato si preclude la possibilità di arrivare a qualche fondata conclusione sull'originale di questo testo.

3. *Geremia* 11,2: riportiamo anche in questo caso tutto il contesto significativo:

1 הדבר אשר היה אל ירמיהו מאת יהוה לאמר 2 שמעו את דברי הברית הזאת ודברתם  
אל איש יהודה ועל יושבי ירושלם 3 ואמרת אליהם...

Il problema (che il Comitato ha trattato di propria iniziativa, non essendo il versetto uno di quelli selezionati dall'ABU, cfr. pp. 551-555) sta nel termine ודברתם, vocalizzato come una seconda persona plurale (וְדִבַּרְתֶּם) in parte della tradizione masoretica, e come una seconda persona con suffisso pronominale nel ms di Leningrado (וְדִבַּרְתָּ). I LXX riportano anch'essi una seconda persona, senza che da essa dipenda alcun pronome; lezione questa che il Comitato qualifica come una «licenza», una «libertà presa nei confronti del testo nel momento di tradurlo, per la quale non si riesce ad individuare una ragione» (p. XIV). Il Comitato, dopo una discussione assai ampia sulla punteggiatura masoretica e sulle divergenze presenti nella tradizione, giudica che «la lezione del ms di Leningrado rappresenta con ogni probabilità la forma originaria di questo testo» (p. 555). Concordiamo con il Comitato, per quanto riguarda la punteggiatura masoretica: il וְדִבַּרְתֶּם di una parte dei mss del TM, della *Vulgata* e del Targum è una armonizzazione al plurale precedente (שמעו). Ma se si vuole dirigersi verso l'originale di questo passo, si deve andare oltre le discussioni sul rapporto tra l'imperativo שמעו e ודברתם, o sulle punteggiature וְדִבַּרְתָּם - וְדִבַּרְתֶּם.

Il punto di partenza è proprio che וְדִבַּרְתֶּם è una *armonizzazione*: occorre domandarsi quale tipo di frase sia quella verso la quale tale armonizzazione

<sup>(8)</sup> Si veda, per queste osservazioni, G. GARBINI, «Il sangue dell'innocente», *Atti della Settimana di Studi «Sangue e antropologia biblica nella letteratura cristiana»*, vol. I (Roma 1982) 513-524, 521. Alle osservazioni di Garbini sulla caratteristica di originalità del testo dei LXX, possiamo aggiungere che l'immagine del leone distruttore ben si adatta a Yahweh nella tradizione biblica, mentre certo non si può dire altrettanto relativamente al popolo.

<sup>(9)</sup> Si veda il nostro «L'uccisione dei profeti. Osea 6,5», *Henoch* 6 (1984) 271-292.

si dirige. In effetti, *שמעו את דברי הברית הזאת* è palesemente una glossa (antica: è già presente nei LXX), che riprende il successivo v. 6. Il termine di relazione sintattico non deve essere perciò il verbo di tale glossa, ma se mai quello successivo, il *ואמרת* del v. 3. Nel contesto dell'invito divino a parlare, in particolar modo nei testi attribuiti al Sacerdotale, è tipica la sequenza *ואמרת... דבר*, vale a dire imperativo seguito dalla seconda persona del perfetto con *waw* conversiva<sup>(10)</sup>. È perciò sostanzialmente certa una congettura, che ricostruisca così l'originale del testo:

1 *הדבר אשר היה אל ירמיהו מאת יהוה לאמר* 2 *דבר אל איש יהודה ועל ישיבי ירושלם*  
3 *ואמרת אליהם...*

L'inserimento della glossa comportò l'inizio di una serie di armonizzazioni: la modifica dell'imperativo in *דברת*, seconda persona singolare (si veda la lezione dei LXX, *καὶ λαλήσεις*, senza suffisso pronominale). Poi l'armonizzazione procedette con l'inserimento del suffisso, ed infine con la variante di vocalizzazione *וְדִבַּרְתָּם*. Proprio la progressione così attestata, oltre alle ragioni stilistiche sopra enunciate, avvalora ancor più la congettura<sup>(11)</sup>.

Abbiamo riportato solo tre esempi, tratti dalle numerose schede che nel corso della lettura del volume si sono accumulate sul nostro tavolo; possono sembrare pochi, in rapporto all'ampio seppur limitato numero di passi presi in considerazione nelle 1013 pagine del libro, ma sono rappresentativi di un metodo che è coerentemente applicato in tutta l'opera, come già lo era nel volume precedente<sup>(12)</sup>.

Solo in un aspetto la «critica della critica» può ritenersi soddisfatta: dai commenti testuali del Comitato emerge in effetti una certa superficialità di trattamento del testo biblico e del Testo Masoretico in particolare da parte di studiosi più o meno moderni, e risaltano pure le carenze della *BHK/BHS*. Ma come abbiamo detto il Comitato non ha saputo sostituire alle insufficienze precedenti nulla di nuovo o di meglio fondato. Le ampie e dotte discussioni sulle versioni e sulle edizioni antiche, sulle esegesi giudaiche, che potrebbero avere un grande valore se inquadrare in un ambito di *storia del testo*, rischiano di nascondere i veri problemi posti dalla tradizione testuale, quando dall'ambito della storia del testo le si trasporta di peso in quello della *critica del testo*.

<sup>(10)</sup> Si veda ad esempio Ez 33,2: *... בן אדם דבר אל בני עמך ואמרת*. ed altri numerosi passi, quali Lev 18,2; 23,2.10; 25,2; 27,2; Num 5,12; 6,2; 15,2.

<sup>(11)</sup> Le osservazioni che abbiamo fatto sono tratte da B. CHIESA, *Corso di Ebraico Biblico*. 2. Esercizi, Crestomazia e Glossario (Brescia 1986) 102-103. La crestomazia curata da Chiesa rappresenta un tentativo — in sé piuttosto raro — di trarre le conseguenze dell'analisi filologica nel riprodurre testi biblici, e contiene numerosi suggerimenti critici degni di essere approfonditi.

<sup>(12)</sup> Per il tipo di conclusioni cui si può giungere tenendo conto di criteri propriamente filologici e storici a proposito di alcuni passi di Samuele presi in considerazione nel volume precedente, si veda A. CATASTINI, «4Q Sam<sup>a</sup>. I. Samuele il 'nazireo'», *Henoch* 9 (1987) 161-196, e id., «4Q Sam<sup>a</sup>. II. Nahash il 'serpente'», in corso di stampa in *Henoch* 10 (1988), fasc. 1.



In conclusione, possiamo dire che il TM ha trovato nel Comitato un paladino, che s'incarica di «proteggerlo», a costo di sacrificare il metodo filologico. La filologia biblica, dal canto suo, può trovare giovamento da questo «rapporto finale» in tutta una serie di suggerimenti, relativi soprattutto all'interpretazione del TM, disseminati nel corso del commento, a patto che essi vengano inseriti in un più valido contesto metodologico. Altrimenti sarà maggiore il danno del profitto<sup>(13)</sup>.

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(13) Si veda anche il giudizio fortemente negativo di J. BARR, *Book List* 1987, 36.

## RECENSIONES

### Vetus Testamentum

William L. HOLLADAY, *Jeremiah 1. Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah. Chapters 1-25* (Hermeneia, A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible). Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1986. xxii-682 p. 23 x 21.

The almost simultaneous appearance of some important commentaries on Jeremiah is an indication of the interest taken in the book of this prophet in recent years. However, only R. P. Carroll (*Jeremiah. A Commentary* [London 1986]) has completed his work; we have the first part (chaps. 1-25) of W. L. Holladay's, as of that of W. McKane (*Jeremiah* [ICC; Edinburgh 1986]); so far, one fascicle (pp. 1-80) of S. Herrmann's (*Jeremia* [BK XII; Neukirchen 1986]) has appeared.

The Hermeneia series has entrusted the commentary on Jeremiah to an exegete well known for his many studies on the historic figure of the prophet and on the philological and stylistic aspects of the book. The author's name is a guarantee of competent work, and a clear and elegant typographical presentation makes for easy reading (our only regret is that the text, laid out in two columns, is not in a straight line on the right).

It is a pity, however, that, for editorial reasons, it was decided to publish the first part of the work without providing it with an *Introduction*, due to appear in the second Volume. The author, too, shares the regret of the reader (p. xi), who in this matter has to go without a synthetic presentation of the literary history of the book, which is of great relevance in interpreting it. The *Preface*, which is only a few pages long, is in fact simply a practical guide to the use of the book.

The opening considerations *A Chronology of Jeremiah's Career* (pp. 1-10), aim at making up, at least in part, for the deficiency, given that, according to the author, it represents an indispensable framework for Jeremiah's activity. Two basic theories (already mentioned in BETL 54 [Louvain 1981] 58-73) underlie the reconstruction of the whole scene of the prophet's life:

1) the thirteenth year of Josiah (Jer 1,2) (627) marks the birth of Jeremiah, not the beginning of his preaching: the prophet's very youthful age at the time of Josiah's reform (622) would explain why, in the book of Jeremiah, there is no explicit mention of this important event in the religious history of Israel; moreover, the order to remain unmarried (given in 601) which

Jeremiah would then have received when 26 years of age, would become more plausible;

2) in keeping with the norm in Deut 31,9–13, the (Deuteronomic) Law was to be recited every seven years (starting in 622), during the Feast of Tabernacles. These seven-year periods (615, 608, etc.) fix — according to Holladay — the chronological structure of Jeremiah's 'career'; on these occasions the prophet would have made his 'counterproclamations' of the Law of which there is evidence in the sections of his book in Deuteronomic prose.

The author's ingenuity and perspicacity in analysing the facts (which we have but briefly summarized) do not wholly relieve the reader's uneasiness over such a reconstruction, based on thin evidence and hence largely hypothetical. If, as is generally believed, historical events are the indispensable basis for understanding the biblical text, it becomes necessary to follow closely the criteria of historiographical science, and hence to be willing to accept a lack of documentary evidence. On our part, we doubt whether such a rigidly prearranged setting can effectively account for Jeremiah's prophetic ministry.

The plan to date each oracle, followed up systematically throughout the whole commentary, is linked with another theory. According to Holladay, besides the death of Josiah (609) and the battle of Carchemish (605), a decisive event in the story of Jeremiah is constituted by the episode of the scroll written by the prophet and burnt by King Joiakim; this fact, dated in the year 601 (following the indication given in the LXX as against the MT), would mark a radical turning-point in the prophet's preaching, which, from being a warning with a view to conversion, would become proclamation of the irrevocable judgment of God. Hence the possibility of distinguishing the oracles belonging to the first scroll from those 'added' later (Jer 36,32) (an opinion maintained earlier in *VT* 30 [1980] 452–467); once certain important oracles are dated, the others can be related to them on the basis of common vocabulary and subject-matter.

It is difficult to imagine there being any general agreement on the arguments adduced; some of the remarks may well seem relevant, but the plan as a whole tends to make one sceptical. Moreover, some questions of a hermeneutical nature remain unanswered which, in our opinion, are particularly relevant for the interpretation of Jeremiah; in particular: why does God order that the prophetic oracles be put in writing (this holds not only for the first and second scrolls but also for the so-called Book of Consolation: 30, 2), and why, in the book of Jeremiah, is there a section, so original when compared with the earlier tradition, on the life and sufferings of the prophet? The answer to these questions is probably to be found in a non-historicizing reading of the events, and advises against filling in the historical gaps in the text with facts, which, though plausible, are not documented.

The general arrangement of the Commentary is substantially the same as that of the *Biblischer Kommentar* (Neukirchen), of which it thus adopts the declaredly scholarly method and purpose; the appropriate bibliography, translation and critical notes on the text are provided for each literary unit; these

are followed by discussion of the literary form (*Form*), dating of the passage (*Setting*), commentary on each verse (*Interpretation*) and, finally, the overall message of the pericope (*Aim*).

The section systematically applied to the study of the structure (*Structure*), which serves as a preliminary to the successive stages of interpretation, is quite a novel feature, not usually found in other Commentaries. According to the author's programme (not always rigidly adhered to) three interrelated questions are faced in succession: delimitation of the unit, its setting in the context, and internal structure.

The delimitation of pericopes in the book of a prophet is undoubtedly a task of great relevance for exegesis, but one which, unfortunately, is usually performed very superficially, with a tendency to break things up into very small literary units. Hence it was with great interest that we perused what Holladay writes on this aspect of exegetical analysis; however, the result achieved did not seem to us satisfactory. The author refers in his Commentary to parts of an earlier study, *The Architecture of Jeremiah 1-20* (Lewisburg-London 1976), which we found equally unconvincing.

We think it should be noted that the very concept of a literary unit is not clearly defined, and that no serious consideration is given to the levels according to which one can talk of a literary unit (along with the related problem of the insertion of the pericope into the 'context'). In any literary work there are, in fact, several very ample sections, subdivided into smaller units which are, in turn, made up of parts, and so on. It is somewhat surprising, for instance, that Holladay should treat the chapter on the calling (1,4-19) as a unit although it is made up of passages of different origin (p. 24). In the same way, the long section 2,1-4,4, which is clearly a collection of different pericopes (p. 62-73) is analysed as a single section; and yet no attention is given to the relatively homogeneous 4,5-6,30 and 7,1-8,3, which, for reasons of style and content, could be dealt with together. Several pages are devoted to the arrangement of 4,5-10,25 (p. 132-138), a section which would appear to have something special about it because of the repeated reference to the enemy coming from the North, and because it all belongs to the same literary genre (announcement of judgment); the literary homogeneity of the section is, however, somewhat tenuous (according to the author, what is brought together here is to a great extent the contents of the second scroll, whereas the first scroll, the one burnt by Joiakim, would be reproduced in the section 2,1-4,4) (p. 133). One wonders, however, why the author does not go on, in the rest of the commentary, to point out the large sections into which the book of Jeremiah is to be divided. It seems strange, then, that the section 21,1-23,8 should not be treated as a unit, given the general agreement of exegetes in seeing therein a homogeneous collection of texts concerning the royal house (p. 568). In this case Holladay clearly succumbs to the fragmentation of which earlier commentators were accused, since this section is split up into as many as sixteen pericopes. The question — which will perhaps be answered in the Introduction that is due to appear — is that of knowing what criteria are used in determining the various units, and what weight is to be given to the final "redaction" when it comes to interpreting the prophetic text.

The third question regarding the structure is its internal arrangement. It consists of a minute series of annotations of various kinds which do not help the reader to grasp the organic unity of the text under discussion. No attempt is made to display the more significant results, nor is it easy to understand the precise function of this kind of analysis, seeing that there is quite often a discussion of distribution into stichs rather than of the structural relationships which go to make up the whole. The term 'inclusion' is wrongly used to denote purely lexical repetition (cf., for instance, p. 25).

A critical judgment on this section of the Commentary by Holladay is further justified by the fact that there is no clear distinction made between the question of the formal (rhetorical) structure of a passage and the question of its literary 'form'. The two questions are too often dealt with together, and there is a superimposition of different levels which does not seem to us to be methodologically precise. Those who practice rhetorical analysis tend to favour a synchronous study of the text in the form of its final redaction; it does not seem methodologically correct to mix this approach with a diachronous treatment. The status of the *Preliminary observations*, which are sometimes prefaced to the above-mentioned analyses, is not clear; repetitions and constant references from one interpretative section to another heighten the impression that there is little organic unity in the exegetical treatment.

More briefly, some remarks on other aspects of the Commentary: the bibliography is very full and will certainly be a valuable source of reference for Jeremiah scholars. We hope that, in the second volume, titles (of commentaries, monographs and articles) judged to be of greater importance will be brought together systematically; the list given on pages xvi-xxi is in fact quite heterogeneous. We found it unnecessary to be given information about publishers of books quoted in the notes or in the philological analysis of the text. We would have preferred the bibliography given at the beginning of each pericope to be in chronological, rather than alphabetical, order.

The translation, judged by the author himself to be 'sometimes excessively wooden' (p. xii), aims at following the Hebrew text closely, so it seems to be specially useful to those less familiar with the original language. It is a pity that, for typographical reasons, the translation is confined to one column. Thus, in the poetical texts the division into stichs, to which the author devotes constant attention in his Commentary, does not stand out clearly. We also think that the system of different parentheses, adopted to indicate interpolations or additions in the authentic text, is too complicated (p. xxii). The decision to translate the tetragrammaton as 'Yahweh' in Jeremiah's original text and as 'the LORD' in post-exilic texts (p. xii) seems questionable to us.

The philological discussion of the MT, together with some original solutions, is very accurate; some readers may be dissatisfied with some of the suggestions which needlessly change a traditional reading of the Hebrew text (as, for example, at Jer 1,5; 4,19; 11,20; 20,11.15; etc.), but all will recognize outstanding, well-documented competence.

The interpretative commentary is sometimes too diffuse; the verse-by-verse analysis often loses sight of the subject-matter as a whole, which is only

partly caught up with at the end, thanks to the section devoted to the 'aim' of the pericope.

Writing a commentary on a book of the Bible these days seems to be not only an arduous, but even a rash enterprise if the aim is to give a critical account of all earlier studies and to face all the aspects that are methodologically relevant to the interpretation of the text. Holladay has very carefully attempted to present a wide-ranging and varied overall picture of the various problems and to follow up his own lines of interpretation which range over the field of an historical and psychological reconstruction of Jeremiah as a person. The critical remarks we have made should therefore be tempered with applause for such a laborious task.

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*Biblia Sacra iuxta latinam vulgatam versionem.* Vol. XVII: *Liber Duodecim Prophetarum.* Romae, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1987. XLVII-290 p.

The appearance of *Liber duodecim prophetarum* [San Girolamo edition] brings the work of the Pontifical Commission for the Revision and Emendation of the Vulgate almost to the end of its critical edition of the Vulgate of the Old Testament. There remains now only 1-2 Maccabees.

The present volume contains not only the critical text of the twelve minor prophets, but also critical editions of various prefaces and introductory material important for our appreciation of Jerome's text: Jerome's prologue to the minor prophets, *Non idem*; the smaller prologues taken from Jerome's *Letter LIII*; scholia to the prophets Hosea, Joel and Amos; a section of Jerome's commentary on Malachia; Jerome's interpretation of the names of the twelve prophets; an excerpt from Jerome's commentary of Joel which appears as a prologue in the editions of Laridius and Stephanus; the prologue to Jerome's commentary on Amos; the *Explanatio*; Theodulf's preface to Habakkuk; Isidore's *Prooem*; and the pertinent sections of Isidore's *De ortu ex obitu Patrum*.

In addition to this wealth of material, the volume continues the tradition begun by the late Dom Jean de Gribomont (in the volume on Isaiah) of providing a generous and clear introduction with information on the relationships among the manuscripts used and on the establishment of the text. At the end of the volume there is a complete list of *orthographica* providing variant spellings for the names of persons and places.

In a number of instances the San Girolamo edition brings corrections to the text where a large portion of the manuscript tradition and printed editions have followed a *lectio faciliior* or possible corrections according to the

presumed sense. At Nahum 1,3, for example, S. Girolamo reads *via*, following both the Massoretic text and the LXX (and one MS of Jerome's commentary) where the preponderance of MSS and editions have *viae*.

A comparison with R. Weber's *Biblia Sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem* (Stuttgart <sup>3</sup>1983) shows that the text differs from that of Weber on approximately 50 readings (excluding minor orthographic variations). We give first Weber's text, followed by that of S. Girolamo: Hosea 2,6: *spinis* 1<sup>o</sup> pr. in; 4,12: *interrogavit*] *interrogabit*; 4,12: *adnuntiavit*] *adnuntiabit*; 5,4: *Dominum*] *Deum*; 8,13: *in Aegyptum*] om. in; 8,14: *et mittam*] *emittam*; 9,6: *congregavit*] *congregabit*; 13,2: *dividet*] *dividit*; 14,1: *Dominum*] *Deum*; 14,2: *in iniquitate tua*] om. in. Joel 2,13: *multae misericordiae*] *multus misericordia*; 2,14: *nostro*] *vestro*. Amos 2,6: *vendiderit*] *vendiderint*; 2,13: *super*] *subter*; 4,12: *haec* 2<sup>o</sup>] *hoc*; 5,8: *effundit*] *effundet*; 6,13: *in amaritudinem*] *in amaritudine*; 9,2: *ad caelum*] *in caelum*. Obad 16: *bibisti*] *bibistis*. Jonah 1,8: *quod est*] om. *est*; 2,3: *inferni*] *inferi*; 2,9: *derelinquant*] *derelinquent*; 3,10: *a via*] *de via*; 4,7: *diluculo*] *diluculi*; 4,9: *putasne*] *putas*. Mic 2,2: *et domos*] + *et*; 4,3: *adversus*] *adversum*; 6,1: *adversum*] *adversus*; 6,5: *cognosceret*] *cognosceres*; 7,9: *in iustitiam eius*] om. in. Nahum 1,3: *viae*] *via*; 3,17: *lucustae* 1<sup>o</sup>] *lucusta*. Hab 1,15: *in rete suo*] *in rete suum*; 2,13: *deficient*] *deficiunt*; 3,3: *et laudis*] om. *et*; 3,19: *Dominus Deus*] *Deus Dominus*. Zeph 2,7: *eius*] *eis*; 2,7: *rimanserit*] *rimanserint*. Hag 1,14: *filii* 1<sup>o</sup>] *fili*; *filii* 2<sup>o</sup>] *fili*; 2,6: *placu*] *pepigi*. Zech 1,7: *undecimo mense*] *undecimi mensis*; 3,8: *Iesu*] *Iesus*; 5,4: *eam*] *eum*; 8,17: *odi*] *odii*; 8,19: *Iuda*] *Iudae*; 10,7: *et exultabit*] om. *et*; 12,3: *in die illa*] *in illa die*; 12,4: *in amentiam*] *in amentia*; 12,8: *eius*] *eorum*; 12,10: *planctu*] *planctum*; 13,1: *domus*] *domui*. Mal 3,18: *convertemini*] *convertimini*.

Most interesting for the question of the establishment of the text is Chapter IV of the introduction, devoted to the question of the archetype. Twenty-three cases are discussed in which there is some difficulty in establishing Jerome's archetype. Among these an instructive case is found in Zeph 2,7 since the San Girolamo reading, *et erit funiculus feist qui remanserint* (in place of *et erit funiculus eius qui remanserit*), is not supported by any direct manuscript evidence. As the introduction explains (xxxviii-xxxix), the attested reading, *eius*, is most likely based on an assimilation from the *funiculus maris* of the preceding verses 5 and 6. *Eis* is justified by: 1) *lš'ryt* has the force of the dative; 2) Jerome frequently uses the plural, *reliquiae*, for this Hebrew collective.

The attestation in the Vulgate for the plural *remanserint*, while not wide, is good (MSS C A\* M<sup>2</sup>). An Old Latin MS (176 = Sangall. 1398b) contains *reliquis*. In Jerome's *Commentarii in Prophetas Minores* (CChr Ser. Lat. LXXVI A; Turnhout 1970), we find the singular in the lemma (*eius qui remanserit*), while Jerome rightly translates LXX as plural (*his, qui reliqui sunt*) reflecting *tois kataloipois*. That Jerome understood the reference to be plural is further supported by the text of his commentary here on Zephania where he says: "et qui nunc reliqui vocantur de domo Iuda" (*Commentarii*, 681). If such is the case, the editors' choice of the plural, along with the restoration of *eis* in place of *eius*, seems indeed justified. It may well be that the much more widely-attested *remanserit* was an erroneous emendation

based on the presence of *eius*, which was itself an assimilation to the genitive *funiculus maris* in vv. 5 and 6.

Congratulations to the editors of this volume on the Twelve Prophets for their painstaking labors and for this contribution to our understanding of the history of the text of the Vulgate.

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Walter GROß, *Die Pendenskonstruktion im Biblischen Hebräisch: Studien zum althebräischen Satz I* (Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament 27. Band. Münchener Universitätsschriften, Philosophische Fakultät Altertumskunde und Kulturwissenschaften). St. Ottilien, EOS Verlag, 1987. viii-229 p.

This monograph is another product of the school of Dr. Wolfgang Richter. The project is investigating the syntax of Old (i.e. biblical) Hebrew, and Groß's study is dedicated to the *Pendenskonstruktion*. This and related linguistic phenomena are variously described by linguists using such terms as *casus pendens* (not strictly appropriate for Hebrew because the classical language no longer has a functional case system), suspended (absolute) construction (this not appropriate either, because the *pendens* often does have grammatical links with the following text), topicalization, hanging topic, left dislocation etc. The term *Pendenskonstruktion* is defended in note 117 on p. 39. Groß has discovered more than one thousand specimens of this construction; he has analysed and classified them under seventy sentence models. He uses the transcription advocated by the Richter school. This involves some degree of historical reconstruction, especially of the vowels. He also uses the *sigla* recommended by that school. These symbols are easily learnt.

The exercise demonstrates the need for and the benefits of systematic, rigorous and exhaustive study of a selected distinct grammatical phenomenon. Quite apart from the significance of the phenomenon itself — and it is not at all marginal to the language, even if it must be deemed marginal to the grammar — the study illustrates and illuminates many fundamental methodological considerations. It is one of the merits of Groß's study that he accepts the evidence of the biblical text as part of the Hebrew language, not setting the *Pendenskonstruktion* aside as a defect in linguistic performance (pp. 8-9). The basic definition (p. 2), paraphrased in my own words, identifies a *pendens* as a linguistic item which has some role in the following clause, yet is isolated from it. It is detached, yet joined. The marks of detachment are the grammatical completeness of this following clause (p. 16) and the break is often shown by a clear signal of fresh clause onset — conjunction, interrogative, etc. The completeness of the clause is secured by a 'pronominal copy' of the *pendens*, and this resumption (as we prefer to call it) or *Aufnahme* is also a link between the clause and the *pendens* and the instru-



ment by means of which the *pendens* plays its role within that following clause. Groß's approach to syntax is broad and holistic. It calls for a multiple taxonomy which proceeds through the hierarchy: 1) The identity and function of the preposed item; 2) The total structure of the construction which it inaugurates; 3) The grammar of the clause which follows the *pendens*; 4) The grammatical and semantic links between the *pendens* and the following clause; 5) Inter-clausal transitions and relationships. This is a lot to handle. A considerable amount of comparative/contrastive analysis is called for. Vague categories and pseudo-explanations, such as the term 'emphasis', are not good enough. There is a difference between the reactivation of attention onto some topic already in the preceding discourse and the introduction of a fresh topic. A topic may be brought into high profile in order to contrast it with some other item in discourse — this, but not that. On p. 11 he recognizes that the *Pendenskonstruktion* sometimes secures the nuance of 'only'. The task calls for precision in identifying both clause-level functions, clause boundaries, and high-level discourse structure.

Such a study has a lot to contribute to the understanding and interpretation of texts in which the *Pendenskonstruktion* is used. Here the copious indexes to texts, authors, topics (pp. 210-229) are indispensable. The distribution of the specimens in relation to date of use is not explored. Given the notorious difficulty of dating so many of the biblical sources, this is understandable. The construction is used throughout the entire corpus. Distribution by genre is made for only two broad categories — prose and poetry. Here the editorial decisions of *BHS* are simply accepted. This is rough and ready; a more refined approach is called for. From time to time contrastive observations are made about poetry *versus* prose, generally the remark that a *pendens* in prose might be quite long (p. 42), whereas a *pendens* with resumption in just one colon of poetry is as short as can be. Detailed scores are given on pp. 40-44; but I cannot square the figures there with the counts for M 1-14. This suggests quite different discourse functions for the *pendens* construction. Distribution in terms of genre sensitivity could be investigated fruitfully, but only if something better than the classification in *BHS* is used. In particular, a common effect in poetry is for the resumptive item to come at the very end of the clause (colon). The question whether this, rather than (or as well as) the preverbal position, is the position of greatest 'emphasis' is never resolved. Groß correctly recognizes that in living speech, intonation, pause-breaks, and variations in loudness (vehemence) are the best indicators of 'emphasis', but these data are not available for modern readers of texts in a dead language. So uncertainty remains, even though a lot of help can be derived from the masoretic cantillations.

The commendable desire to be rigorous and objective carries with it the danger of a formalism that can become mechanical. Some of Groß's summaries, such as S 4 (p. 86) and S 5 (p. 87) become quite elaborate. Many of the constituents distinguished in his numerous symbols do not seem to be essential to the *Pendenskonstruktion* as such, and could have been covered by simpler generalizations. But you never know when some little detail is likely to be significant, so we agree that it is better to describe everything and let the reader form his own impressions.

An interesting tension emerges from the criteria used. A suspended construction is recognized as such only when the following clause has a fresh onset and/or when the *pendens* is resumed through repetition or some kind of anaphoric reference. The presence of 'and/or' in the definition suggests that neither criterion is essential — one is enough. It would seem that the following clause can be complete without the *pendens*, which is stranded, and grammatically incomplete. But is this really so? The use of *nota accusativi* to mark a proposed object means that it is not indeterminate, neutral, or 'absolute', it is evidently the marked object of the following verb, and, by that token, is part of the clause built up around that verb (Models 1-5). Groß faces up to this problem, and has a good discussion on p. 32-39. It is possible to find two clauses which are identical except that one has a pleonastic pronominal object which echoes ('copies' is his term) a preposed nominal object. The following clause is complete without the *pendens* only if we think that the pronoun can manage without its antecedent, and only if we say that the object cannot occur twice in the same clause (p. 35). Why not? It happens, even without a *pendens*: *wattir'—ēhū 'et-hayyeled* (Exod 2,6). Here the noun object follows the pronoun object epexegetically. In the *Pendens-konstruktion* it precedes it, for topicalization. The problem is fascinating and subtle. Suppose the resumptive item were not used. The preposed item would then be construed, not as *pendens*, but as placed in an unusual position for purposes of focus or emphasis. In other words, the *Pendens-konstruktion* occurs in a subset of clauses which have preverbal placement of an item for topicalization.

An adequate review of this important study would require close argumentation over many details. Here we can give only a few illustrations.

1) If explicit resumption of the *pendens* is seen as essential in the construction, then the examples in 1.3 (pp. 30f) should not be admitted (except for 2 Kgs 16,14 — see p. 30 note 99). At the same time Groß is correct to assert as a *rule* of Hebrew grammar the omission of the object from all but the first of a string of verbs (a pattern which we call brachylogy) (p. 36). The patterns found in these cases weaken considerably the power of conjunctions to mark clause onset. For the more the *pendens* is recognized as an integral part of the whole construction, that is of one complete clause, the more one is obliged to recognize the existence of the conjunction *within* the body of the clause, not at its onset. On p. 27 (note 89) the idea of *waw-emphaticum* is not rejected; but we suggest that the difficulty that many scholars have had in accepting this notion (the difficulty lies partly in showing why the conjunction is 'emphatic') can be relieved by recognizing that the conjunction is post-positive. The 'and' in Job 15,17 is one instance (note 101, p. 31).

2) More consideration should be given to rhetorical constraints, especially in poetry. Thus in Hos 8,6 the alleged *pendens hū'* achieves chiasmus with *hū'* at the end of the next colon. Many of the texts under B 14 (p. 32) involve chiasmus.

3) This issue is part of a larger question, whether a certain structure is needed for high-level functions in discourse. Only rarely does Groß look further ahead in the text to see if the resumptive pronoun is needed, not just for reference back to the *pendens*, although it does do that, but also to make

connections with the ensuing text. Thus in Gen 23,11 the first *netattihâ* links with the second one (p. 25). Only once (Prov 30,17 — p. 20, note 53) does he note the dependence of two clauses on one *pendens*, and he even counts that case twice for that reason! But there are numerous cases — Deut 2,23; 7,15; Lev 27,26; Isa 43,7; 44,29; 56,6-7; 65,11-12; etc. Some (e.g. 2 Kgs 17,36; Isa 8,13) even have three following clauses, and the supply of a resumptive item in the first one enhances its parallelism with those following.

4) While specimens of *Pendenskonstruktion* in poetry are distinguished from prose, the grammatical differences between these two genres are not always appreciated. In poetry it is often the case that the clause which seems to follow a *pendens* is actually relative, although 'ăšer is not used. The *pronominale Kopie* is then not resumptive, but the usual construction in a relative clause. Thus Job 37,23 — "Shadday (whom) we do not find is great in power, and (he who) does not answer is great in judgment and righteousness". In Prov 30,19 more attention should have been given to the pronoun *hëmmâ* — "There (are) three things (which) are too wonderful for me, and four (which) I don't know (them)".

5) Not enough attention is paid to constructions in which the resumptive pronoun is not in grammatical concord with the *pendens*. Ezek 16,58 (p. 13); 2 Chr 8,2 (p. 22); Ps 104,6 (p. 24); etc, involve clash of gender. When the *pendens* is built on *kol*, the resumptive pronoun can be either singular or plural. It is possible that discord in number involves the difference between collective and distributive, and only the use of the explicit resumptive pronoun secures this distinction. See Ezek 11,5.

6) The difficulty of charting clause boundaries unambiguously is discussed in a long note (n. 119) on pp. 40-41. Much depends on our ability to identify a clause as 'complete'.

On p. 36 B 12 should be B 12a.

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## Novum Testamentum

Donald JUEL, *Messianic Exegesis. Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity*. Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1987. xii-193 p. 22,3 × 14,7. ISBN 0-8006-0840-2.

Donald Juel is Associate Professor of New Testament at Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. He did his doctoral work at Yale and enjoyed a sabbatical year at Oxford. Those great centers

of learning figure importantly in this stimulating book, principally through the influence of Nils A. Dahl and Geza Vermes.

Juel's thesis is simple and straightforward. As part of his summary he writes: "I have argued that the confession of Jesus as the crucified and risen King of the Jews stands *at the beginning* of christological reflection and interpretation of the Scriptures—at least the reflection and interpretation that form the substructure of NT Christianity. Beginning with the historical realities of Jesus' passion as King of the Jews, we can understand the process by which a variety of biblical passages came to be enlisted in the task of making sense of Jesus and his career, and how they were combined" (p. 171).

That is to say, it is the confession of Jesus as Messiah which stands at the beginning of Christian reflection and provides a focus and a direction for exegesis of Scripture (cf. p. 1) — not the Suffering Servant, not the Son of man, not the eschatological prophet, not Wisdom, not the Righteous Sufferer (cf. pp. 1-2). Jesus can be acclaimed the risen Messiah only if he was executed as King of the Jews, i.e., a messianic pretender (cf. p. 2).

Belief in Jesus as Messiah gave rise to messianic exegesis. Given this thesis, Juel must develop an approach to the understanding of how the first Christians interpreted the language and imagery of the Old Testament with reference to the royal Jesus. Thus Chapter 1, "Messianic Exegesis: Developing an Approach" (pp. 5-29). Christian exegesis shows similarities to the midrashic exegesis in use at Qumran and among later rabbis; but it was also influenced decisively by Jesus. Thus Chapter 2, "Rules of the Game: Biblical Interpretation in the First Century C.E." (pp. 31-57). Royal texts from the Old Testament which were acknowledged as messianic in postbiblical Jewish tradition played a critical role in the development of Christian exegesis. Such a text is 2 Sam 7: see Qumran and see the New Testament. Thus Chapter 3, "Christ the King: Christian Interpretation of 2 Samuel 7" (pp. 59-88). Another source of Christian exegesis were the Psalms, especially Pss 22, 31, and 69 with regard to the Passion. Thus Chapter 4, "Christ the Crucified: Christian Interpretation of the Psalms" (pp. 89-117). Still another proposed source were the "Servant" passages of Isaiah, although they were not as important as is sometimes claimed. Thus Chapter 5, "The Servant-Christ: Christian Interpretation of Second Isaiah" (pp. 119-133; this section is particularly well done). Ps 110 was clearly a major influence in early Christian exegesis. Thus Chapter 6, "Christ at the Right Hand: The Use of Psalm 110 in the New Testament" (pp. 135-150). The enigmatic self-designation of Jesus as "the Son of man" leads to a discussion of the role of Dan 7 in early Christian exegesis. Thus Chapter 7, "The Risen Christ and the Son of Man: Christian Use of Daniel 7" (pp. 151-170; some good insights but of necessity leaves a lot unsaid). A final chapter, "Conclusions" (pp. 171-179), sums up and essays links with the world of systematic christology.

Juel's book seems to this reviewer to be on the right track but for a reason which the author neglects to emphasize: the Kingdom. The Kingdom is pervasive in the Synoptics and linked with Jesus' Kingship in the Fourth Gospel (18,33-38) and elsewhere (cf. Luke 23,37-38.42-43). Granted that Juel recognizes the need for further work; but an aspect as relevant as the

King's Kingdom would seem to have deserved some reflection (cf. *Bib* 64 [1983] 141-142; 65 [1984] 128-129). Jesus' Passion and Resurrection were the starting point for early Christian reflection; they cried out for reflection. But they cry out partly because of Jesus' previous teaching about the Kingdom (cf. Juel, p. 175).

Juel warns early on (p. 23) about the mistake of thinking that "the first believers had available to them a number of distinct eschatological constructs, each with a particular label like" 'Son of man', 'Son of God', 'Lord', or 'Christ'. The reviewer is not so sure. Certainly some designations are a "product of scholarly creativity in the present" (p. 23), for example, the "apocalyptic Son of man". But the basic pattern of Jesus' using the phrase "son of man" in reference to himself and being countered by an interlocutor using some messianic title seems to occur too often to be anything but a reflection of the *Sitz-im-Leben Jesu* (cf. *Bib* 64 [1983] 143).

Professor Juel begins his first chapter with a citation of 1 Cor 15,3-7 as an example of a short creedal summary that "takes us back into the earliest years of the fledgling movement that began among Jesus' followers" (p. 5). This text is evoked from time to time and is used with a flourish at the end as a kind of inclusion (p. 179), but does not figure all that much in the argumentation. More relevant for his thesis would seem to have been Luke 24,26-27, imbedded as it is in what seem to be technical terms for contemporary exegetical techniques (cf. *CBQ* 49 [1987] 134). Here is splendid substantiation of Juel's thesis that the suffering and resurrection of the Messiah are the starting point for an exegesis using Jewish methods on Old Testament texts. And used by no less a person than Jesus himself, in the view of one professing to have investigated all things "exactly" (Luke 1,3).

*Messianic Exegesis* is the kind of book one picks up in hope and puts down without regret. If it is laced with observations which invite queries it is also laced with observations which elicit assent. It is the kind of book which kindles insight. Encores are in order.

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James SWETNAM, S.J.

Frank J. MATERA, *Passion Narratives and Gospel Theologies. Interpreting the Synoptics Through Their Passion Stories* (Theological Inquiries). New York-Mahwah, Paulist Press, 1986. xi-256 p. 20,3×13,7.

New Testament scholars will recognize Matera as the author of the important dissertation, *The Kingship of Jesus: Composition and Theology in Mark 15* (SBLDS 66; Chico, CA 1982). The kind of analysis that the author used in that work, he applies here more broadly to all three synoptic Gospels.

As its title indicates, the present volume is a study of the passion narratives both in themselves and as those narratives participate in theologies of their respective gospels as a whole. The focus, then, is not historical but literary. The work is divided into nine chapters. Matera's procedure is to devote three chapters to each of the synoptic gospels. In the first, he provides an overview of the passion narrative and discusses the question of sources. In the second, he does a commentary on the particular passion story. In the third, he chooses a set of four themes for each of the passion narratives and shows how those themes have been elaborated in the rest of that particular gospel.

Regarding the question of sources for the Marcan passion account, Matera provides a brisk review of the literature to establish that he is operating at the heart of the received exegetical tradition when he treats the passion of Mark as a creative reworking of received evangelical tradition.

Chapter two is a section-by-section analysis of Mark 14 and 15. Drawing especially on the work of R. Pesch, J. Gnilka, and the insights of his own 1982 dissertation, Matera provides a detailed literary commentary on the Marcan passion account. His focus centers in part on structural patterns but even more upon linguistic connections. With regard to structure, Matera mainly attends to Mark's characteristic "sandwich arrangement". As for the linguistic links, he analyzes the two kinds which are most important in a literary study such as this: (1) the connections interior to the Marcan narrative itself, especially the way what happens in the passion chapters has been prepared for in the preceding chapters of Mark and (2) the allusions to the OT. In elaborating the OT background, Matera is especially helpful in showing Mark's (or the tradition's) use of the figure of the "righteous sufferer" of the psalms of lament in interpreting the passion of Jesus. The documentation regarding secondary sources is reasonably representative for a study as broad as this.

The four themes of the Marcan passion that Matera chooses in chapter three to illustrate Mark's gospel theology are Jesus' royal sonship, Jesus and his disciples, Jesus and the temple, and Jesus and the future. Matera demonstrates well that these key themes of Mark's passion narrative are also integral to the rest of his Gospel. The strongest part is the fruit of his own special study, the royal sonship of Jesus as it is revealed in obedient and trusting acceptance of the cross.

Applying the same format of analysis to the passion according to Matthew, Matera shows how the Marcan passion tradition takes on new highlights by virtue of its placement in a new literary setting. Making good use of the recent work of Senior, Kingsbury, and Meier, he provides a brisk commentary of the passion narrative itself and then shows how that narrative has elaborated the Matthean gospel themes of Jesus as royal Davidic Messiah, Israel's rejection of Jesus, the church as God's new nation, and Jesus as model of righteousness.

Similar treatment (with insights drawn especially from Jervell, S. Brown, R. Brown, Fitzmyer, Karris, and L. T. Johnson) is accorded Luke's passion and gospel theology. Regarding the question of Luke's source(s), Matera argues that the most plausible theory is that Luke reworked Mark's passion

account. The four themes which Matera finds to link the Lucan passion account most intimately with the rest of the Third Gospel are the passion as the destiny of Jesus, the passion as a model for discipleship, the passion as the rejection of Jesus the prophet, and the passion as the death of God's royal Son.

Since this book is not the demonstration of a thesis but rather the elaboration of literary textures, it does not lend itself to summary. Suffice it to say that Matera illuminates that texture with order, clarity, and insight.

I have a small list of quibbles and gaps. We are told on p. 63, in a discussion of the bread (*artos*) theme, that in the reference to "leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod" (Mark 8,16), the Greek reads "bread", whereas in fact it reads "leaven" (*tes zymes*). Curiously, in his discussion of how Matthew shows Jesus transcending mere sonship of David (pp. 128-129), he fails to discuss the healing of the lame and blind in the temple as a reversal of David's cursing of the blind and lame in 2 Sam 5,8.

Occasionally, interesting and controverted questions are passed over without at least a nod to their existence. For example, while we get a good survey of the various interpretations of the darkness after the crucifixion, we are told that the incident of the naked young man "is not meant to be interpreted humorously or symbolically" (p. 27), which is simply to dismiss the topic without reference to some of the fascinating work that has been done on this passage. Again, in his discussion of the righteousness theme in Matthew (*dikaiosynē* sometimes meaning "gift" but more often meaning "right behavior"), Matera, on p. 146, interprets the term in Matt 5,6 and 6,33 to mean doing God's demands, whereas on p. 144 he has asserted (here correctly, it seems to me) that *dikaiosynē* in those two verses connotes the element of "gift, the new relationship established between God and the individual". Oddly, while Matera makes good use of J. Neyrey's 1983 article on Luke 23,27-31, he neglects the same author's earlier piece on Jesus in the garden ("The Absence of Jesus' Emotions—the Lucan Redaction of Lk 22,37-46", *Bib* 61 [1980] 153-171), which would have confirmed and enriched his treatment of the Lucan theme of Jesus as model for discipleship. But these are rare slips in an otherwise clear and cogent work.

The professional student of the synoptic Gospels will find few surprises here. What is new is the gathering into one brief work the converging insights of the past twenty years of redaction and composition criticism of the synoptic gospels with special attention to the remarkable thematic resonances between those gospels and their respective passion accounts. Matera's own work is now an important part of that growing collaboration.

The passion accounts are often treated as though they had a theological and literary life of their own. And there may indeed be some truth to the hypothesis of a pre-Markan, free-standing passion narrative. What is becoming increasingly clear, however, is that the passion accounts, as they stand in our canonical gospels, are part and parcel of the respective theologies of those gospels. Matera's volume is one of the clearest demonstrations of that truth with respect to the synoptic gospels.

This study will be an apt tool for a course in the synoptic gospels and an essential volume for any basic theological library. The book teaches the

reader how to "read a gospel whole". It is a straightforward explication of narrative theology.

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Maurice CARREZ, *La deuxième épître de saint Paul aux Corinthiens* (Commentaire du Nouveau Testament, deuxième série, VIII). Genève, Editions Labor et Fides, 1986. 260 p.

In questi ultimi anni la 2 Cor è stata oggetto di particolare interesse da parte dei Paolinisti. Dopo i commenti di V. P. Furnish (cf. R. Penna, *Bib* 67 [1986] 419-421) di F. Lang (cf. R. P. Martin, *Bib* 68 [1987] 577-580) e di R. P. Martin (cf. J.-N. Aletti, *Bib* 68 [1987] 581-582), è ora la volta di quello preparato da M. Carrez.

L'autore, Professore di NT alla Facoltà protestante di Teologia a Parigi, è ben noto, oltre che come esegeta, anche come studioso del greco biblico, che egli insegna all'Institut Catholique. E una speciale caratteristica di questo Commento è proprio la particolare attenzione al lessico paolino, i cui vocaboli vengono scrutati e spiegati scrupolosamente. In questa direzione va anche l'utilizzazione dei papiri, con i quali, come si sa, le lettere del NT condividono la lingua popolare del tempo. Ciò conduce anche il Carrez a interrogarsi più volte sulle varie possibilità di tradurre un testo, quando esso può avere diversi significati (come per esempio il participio *katoptrizómenoi* in 3,18, la locuzione *ei kai* in 5,16, il concetto di *skólops* in 12,7. E in genere la versione offerta risulta limpida e pertinente.

L'Autore si dimostra anche particolarmente sensibile all'ambiente storico della lettera. Così, alle pp. 27-30, egli ricostruisce le circostanze della fuga di Paolo da Efeso, e quindi il momento cronologico della composizione di 2 Cor, con riferimento all'assassinio di G. Silano, proconsole d'Asia, tra la fine del 54 e l'inizio del 55. Il tentativo è nuovo e interessante, anche se non vedo bene il nesso con il problema della datazione della nostra lettera, la quale in realtà è probabilmente uno scritto redazionalmente composito. Su questo punto, in effetti, Carrez propone di vedere in 2 Cor, pur senza darne una vera dimostrazione, un insieme di cinque scritti, cronologicamente così susseguentisi: 2,14-7,4 (potrebbe essere una «lettera intermedia» che sostituisce il cosiddetto viaggio intermedio o che sta tra le due visite di Tito a Corinto; l'ipotesi non è provata; in ogni caso il passo 6,14-7,1, che molti considerano estraneo al contesto, è qui ritenuto paolino e ben inserito al suo posto); 10-13 (è la «lettera dalle molte lacrime»); 1,1-2,13+7,5-16 (una apologia dell'apostolato paolino, di tono sereno, che potrebbe anche consistere nell'intera sezione 1-7, se non c'è stata una lettera intermedia); infine vengono i due biglietti: il cap. 8 (a Corinto) e il cap. 9 (a tutta l'Acaia).

Come si vede, si tratta di posizioni interessanti. Se un limite vi si può



individuare, è che l'Autore non sempre dibatte le questioni, a cui viene a mancare più volte una chiara e conclusiva presa di posizione. Così avviene anche a proposito di altri problemi, come quello della identificazione degli avversari di Paolo (cf. pp. 30-33, dove però si trova un utile status quaestionis), e nell'esegesi circa l'«offensore» (cf. p. 67) e i «superapostoli» (cf. p. 212). Anche per quanto riguarda la sezione dei capp. 10-13, non vi è premessa alcuna introduzione specifica che tratti i suoi problemi propri, contrariamente a quanto avviene per altre sezioni, come 2,14-17 (cf. pp. 75s); 4,16-5,10 (cf. pp. 121s); 6,14-7,1 (cf. p. 165); 8 (cf. p. 177); 9 (cf. pp. 189s).

In compenso, il Carrez propone alle pp. 18-20 una originale struttura della lettera, sulla base della comune suddivisione nelle tre parti redazionali (1,12-7,16; 8-9; 10-13). In ciascuna delle tre, egli indovina una articolazione chiasmica secondo lo schema ABCB'A' (che in 8-9 diventa ABCC'B'A'). Ritengo la proposta degna di molta attenzione, soprattutto per quanto riguarda la prima parte (A: 1,12-2,13; B: 2,14-3,18; C: 4,1-5,10; B': 5,11-6,13; A': 6,14-7,16). Qui, infatti, anche se alcune pericopi potrebbero essere collocate diversamente (per esempio 4,1-6 potrebbe forse stare meglio con B che con C, e 6,11-13 con A' più che con B'), è possibile notare richiami, inclusioni, rimandi, che Carrez mette opportunamente in luce e che ci offrono una costruzione epistolare ben bilanciata.

Tutto sommato, l'Autore ha fatto un buon lavoro. In definitiva, egli sottopone la filologia, l'analisi storica, letteraria e linguistica, alla valorizzazione dell'intento di fondo di tutta la 2 Cor: quello di far vedere che l'apostolato ha tutta la sua ragion d'essere e d'agire nella centralità di Cristo. Il volume assolve ottimamente a questo scopo. Purtroppo si può lamentare una stampa non sempre ben curata. Però all'inizio di ciascuna delle 51 pericopi, in cui Carrez ha metodologicamente suddiviso il testo, si trova una specifica bibliografia, che serve per ulteriori approfondimenti. E un insolito «Indice dei temi» al termine del volume permette di reperire con abbondanza quanto interessa anche per una varia lettura del testo paolino.

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## Varia

J. DE WAARD - E. A. NIDA, *From One Language to Another. Functional Equivalence in Bible Translating*. Nashville - Camden - New York, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1987, VIII-224 p. 23,5 × 15,8. \$ 15.95.

Este libro se coloca en la serie de obras sobre el tema escritas por Nida y sus colaboradores. De ellas sigo considerando las más importantes la escrita en colaboración con Ch. R. Taber, *Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden

1969) y *Componential Analysis of Meaning* (The Hague 1975). Buena parte de los trabajos precedentes se incorpora al presente volumen, cuya estructura «organization» está indicada en pg. 19. En esta nota crítica me voy a fijar en dos puntos.

1. A la línea del análisis componencial pertenecen unas páginas lúcidas sobre lexicografía, en las que algunos ejemplos compensan la brevedad del desarrollo. Son las páginas 158-176 y llevan los títulos: «Inadequacies in Traditional Approaches to Biblical Lexicography» y «Contrastive and Contextual Factor in Determining Meanings». Aunque el practicante de la traducción tiene que atenerse a los instrumentos existentes, no está de más señalar sus limitaciones y apuntar un camino a la investigación futura. Pienso que también los trabajos de Greimas, Geckeler y Coseriu (no citados en la bibliografía) podrían orientar en dicha tarea.

2. También entra en esta obra la distinción fundamental entre estructura profunda y de superficie, en la que se funda el trabajo de recomposición del sentido al traducir. La expresión anterior «equivalencia dinámica» ha sido sustituida por «equivalencia funcional», para evitar malentendidos. Ante todo, el traductor opera con conjuntos («set») sintagmáticos y paradigmáticos. En el sintagma menor y mayor una palabra o expresión cumple varias funciones, en los diversos planos del discurso: p.e. función sintáctica «es complemento», función semántica «significa tal cosa, connota, define el campo...», función retórica y estética, etc. Al pasar de una lengua a otra no siempre coinciden las formas superficiales de dos palabras respectivas de ambas lenguas y las funciones. La traducción puede exigir: el análisis de funciones en el conjunto original, la recreación y reparto de dichas funciones en una nueva forma, que puede diferir de la original.

Pues bien, no sé por qué a ésto lo llaman «isomorfismo», cuando es lo contrario, anisomorfismo: «not their formal resemblance but their functional equivalence» (68). El principio es legítimo y fecundo, la denominación no me parece acertada.

En segundo lugar, el capítulo 4, que los autores consideran fundamental «the most significant way of dealing» (19), lo encuentro algo confuso por la cantidad de material heterogéneo no tan bien organizado. Creo que se debería llegar a una clasificación más lógica de casos, según las funciones, simples y combinadas, y en correlación con la forma alterada.

Paso a discutir un punto que considero muy importante: ¿hasta qué punto se puede sacrificar la forma en aras de la supuesta función? Aquí entra de lleno la dimensión literaria o estilística, que el libro llama «retórica», como ciencia o arte del uso expresivo de procedimientos. Al tema se dedican dos capítulos, 5 y 6 (78-120). La brevedad con que se trata el tema importantísimo de las imágenes (dos páginas) se procura compensar con las siete páginas del cap. 7 dedicadas al «sentido literal y figurado». El término figurado, metáfora o metonimia, ¿es una pieza más en la serie de posibles sustituciones paradigmáticas? ¿Cumplen la misma función en el conjunto una imagen y el concepto equivalente? Los autores reconocen que este es uno de los problemas más graves del traductor (112) y proponen tres soluciones: reproducir la imagen original, sustituirla por una equivalencia funcional (otra imagen o un concepto), añadir una nota marginal.

La «nota marginal» (112.155) o ad calcem habría que aceptarla como principio y no meterla en el texto como si fuera traducción. Cito la versión inglesa que da el libro de la versión alemana (Die Gute Nachricht) de Sal 60,8 = 108,9 «I have thrown my shoe on Edom *in order to indicate my right of possession*». La parte subrayada es paráfrasis explicativa que no está en el texto. Creo que sería más honesto, más respetuoso del texto, ponerlo en nota.

Vuelvo al tema de las imágenes con un par de ejemplos. La expresión magnífica de Am 4,6 *nātattī lākem niqyôn šinnayim* = «les daré impunidad de dientes, dientes inmunes, dientes sin estrenar» (cambio de imagen), se traduce «I will cause a famine». Eso no es traducir, sino sustituir la expresión poética por otra prosaica. Si la acción se reitera, el resultado será prosificar la poesía. Otro ejemplo y otro aspecto de la cuestión: «la frase circuncidados de corazón puede no significar absolutamente nada» (156). Distingo: a uno que no conoce la Biblia, que lee el texto desagajado y por primera vez, concedo. Uno que se va familiarizando con el mundo bíblico, que aprecia ya la importancia asignada a la circuncisión en tantos textos, al leer las frases de Jr 4,4 o 9,24s, se sorprende y aprecia su fuerza polémica y expresiva. La misión del traductor no es escamotear imágenes o sustituirlas por conceptos o expresiones triviales para ahorrarle trabajo al lector, sino educar al lector para que entre en el mundo poético e imaginativo del texto original. Entonces ¿qué hacer? Lo que dicen los autores: «se debería evitar la tendencia a eliminar o demetaforizar expresiones figuradas» (155). Quisiera que ésto se convirtiera en uno de los principios de la teoría y la práctica de traducir textos poéticos bíblicos.

A las listas de las páginas 183s añadido: V. García Yebra, *Teoría y práctica de la traducción* (Madrid 1985).

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## NUNTII PERSONARUM ET RERUM

### Pontificium Institutum Biblicum Annus academicus 1987-1988. II semestre

Auditores inscripti erant 310, qui in diversas categorias sic distribuebantur:

	Ad Doctoratum	Ad Licentiam	Hospites	Universi
Fac. Biblica	18	260	28	306
Fac. Orientalistica	—	2	2	4
Universi	18	262	30	310
Nationes	59	Alumni		310
Dioceses	159	Alumni		169
Inst. Religiosorum	49	Alumni		113
Inst. Religiosarum	12	Alumnae		12
Ex statu laicali	16	Alumnae		9
		Alumni		7

### Laureae

Laureae in Re Biblica digni declarati sunt:

MORLA ASENSIO, D. Victor (27.I.1988). *El fuego en el Antiguo Testamento. Estudio de semántica lingüística* (Summa cum laude). Moderator: L. ALONSO SCHÖKEL.

FISCHER, Georg, S.J. (29.IV.1988). *Jahwe unser Gott. Sprache, Aufbau und Erzähltechnik in der Berufung des Mose (Ex 3-4)* (Cum laude). Moderator: J. L. SKA.

VOLPI, Marco Luigi, O.F.M. Cap. (13.V.1988). *Battesimo e diluvio. Ricerca su 1 Pt 3,20b-21 nel contesto di 3,18-21* (Magna cum laude). Moderator: A. VANHOYE.

MORA PAZ, D. César Alejandro (25.V.1988). *Dimensión socio-religiosa de la carta a Filemón. Su función comunicativa y su contenido* (Magna cum laude). Moderator: F. LENTZEN-DEIS.

KANJIRAKOMPIL, D. Cherian (03.VI.1988). *Proclamation in Mark. An Exegetical Study of the Kerygmatic Terminology in the Second Gospel* (Magna cum laude). Moderator: K. STOCK.

Doctores in Re Biblica renuntiati sunt, typis edita thesi:

BLOEM, Henk, *Die Ostererzählung des Matthäus. Aufbau und Aussage von Mt 27,57–28,20* (extractum). Zeist 1987.

RUBINKIEWICZ, Ryszard, S.D.B., *L'apocalypse d'Abraham en vieux slave. Introduction, texte critique, traduction et commentaire*. Lublin 1987.

### **Elenchus of Biblical Bibliography**

In order to avoid certain juridical difficulties the *Elenchus Bibliographicus Biblicus* has ceased publication as a periodical with its volume 65, covering publications up through the year 1984.

However, the service of the Pontifical Biblical Institute to international scholarly exegesis will continue unabated with a new series, of which the series-title will be 'Elenchus of Biblical Bibliography'.

The individual volumes will be entitled *Elenchus of Biblica*. The first volume, for publications of the year 1985, has now appeared.

We are confident that this new series will be recognized by exegetes worldwide as no less useful and satisfying than the well-known former periodical *Elenchus Bibliographicus Biblicus*.

Rome, June 1, 1988

Albert VANHOYE, S.J.  
Rector of the Pontifical Biblical Institute

## LIBRI AD DIRECTIONEM MISSI

La liste ci-dessous comprend tous les livres adressés à *Biblica* qui sont en rapport avec les études bibliques, y compris ceux qui ne pourront faire l'objet d'un compte rendu. En signalant un ouvrage, la Revue ne se prononce pas à son sujet.

Les livres envoyés à la Revue ne seront pas retournés à l'expéditeur, même si aucun compte rendu n'en est publié (à moins qu'ils n'aient été envoyés sur demande de la Direction).

Les livres et les articles ou extraits de revues qui nous sont adressés seront communiqués au directeur de l'*Elenchus of Biblical Bibliography*.

Prière d'adresser les envois à la «Direction de *Biblica*, Pontificio Istituto Biblico, Via della Pilotta 25, 00187 Rome, Italie».

### Vetus Testamentum

**Alba Cecilia**, Amparo, *Biblia Babilonica, Jeremias*. Edición crítica según manuscritos hebreos de puntuación babilónica (Textos y Estudios «Cardenal Cisneros» 41). Madrid 1987, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas. XXI-164 p.

**Anderson**, Gary A., *Sacrifices and Offerings in Ancient Israel*. Studies in their Social and Political Importance (Harvard Semitic Monographs 41). Atlanta, Georgia, Scholars Press, 1987. XIII-160 p. 22,2 × 14,2. US \$14.95.

**Boling**, Robert G., *The Early Biblical Community in Transjordan* (The Social World of Biblical Antiquity Series, 6). Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1988. 80 p. 22,1 × 13,8. US \$25.00.

**Bonora**, Antonio, *Isaia 40-66. Israele: servo di Dio, popolo liberato* (Leggere Oggi la Bibbia 1.19). Brescia, Editrice Queriniana, 1988. 157 p. 21 × 13. Lit. 15.000.

**Borbone**, Pier Giorgio - **Mandracci**, Francesco, *Concordanze del testo siriano di Osea* (Memorie dell'Accademia delle Scienze di Torino. Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche V, II, 1-4). Torino, Accademia delle Scienze, 1987. 191 p. 25,2 × 17,5.

**Braulik**, Georg, *Studien zur Theologie des Deuteronomiums* (Stuttgarter Biblische Aufsatzbände 2). Stuttgart, Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1988. 342 p. 20,5 × 14,3.

**Buchholz, Joachim**, *Die Ältesten Israels im Deuteronomium* (Göttinger Theologische Arbeiten 36). Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987. 140 p. 24,2 × 16,5. DM 28,—.

**Coats, George W.**, *Moses. Heroic Man, Man of God* (JSOT Supplement Series 57). Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1988. 254 p. 22 × 14. US \$35.00.

**Cogan, M. – Tadmor, H.**, *II Kings. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (The Anchor Bible 11). New York, N.Y. 1988. xxxv-371 p. 24 × 16. US \$20.00.

**Cox, Claude E. (ed.)**, *VI Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Jerusalem 1986* (SBL, Septuagint and Cognate Studies Series 23). Atlanta, Georgia, Scholars Press, 1987. xxiii-464 p. 22,2 × 14,2.

**Díez Macho, Alejandro (†)**, *Apócrifos del Antiguo Testamento*, Tomo V. Testamentos o Discursos de Adiós. Madrid, Ediciones Cristiandad, 1987. 527 p. 24 × 15.

**Díez Macho, Alejandro (†)**, *Biblia Babilonica, Fragmentos de Salmos, Job y Proverbios* (Ms. 508 A del Seminario Teológico Judío de Nueva York) (Textos y Estudios «Cardenal Cisneros» 42). Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1987, LXXIV-106 p. 27 × 19.

**Díez Merino, Luis**, *Targum de Qohelet*. Edición Príncipe del Ms. Villamil nº 5. (Bibliotheca Hispana Biblica Vol. 13). Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1988. 405 p. 23,4 × 17.

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